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俺の彼女と幼なじみが修羅場すぎる7

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俺の彼女と幼なじみが修羅場すぎる7

【件名】契約解消

【本文】今まで本当にありがとう
ヒメに偽恋人の件がバレて以降、「自演乙」に様々な変化があった。
学年トップの座を奪われ、復活を期す鋭太。そんな鋭太のため料理を覚える千和。中2病の暴走も収まり、一皮向けたヒメ。恋愛脳が絶好調、ひとり大勝利する愛衣。
そして鋭太に別れを告げた真涼は、学校を欠席して――。
真涼不在のまま学園祭の季節がやってきた。どうなる「自演乙」！
「真涼、本当にそれでいいのか!?」
「去り際は潔く、よ」
裕時悠示×るろおが贈る、甘修羅らぶ×らぶコメディ第7弾！

俺の彼女と
幼なじみが修羅場
すぎる

Osananajimi

= Shuraba

Motokano

Konyakusha

春咲千和
Chiwa Harusaki

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#1: Masuzu's Letter

#0 真涼の手紙

Let me read JoJo.

Please let me read JoJo's Bizarre Adventure.

JoJo!

JoJo! JoJo!

JoJoJoJoJoJoJoJoJoJoJoJoJoJoJoJoJo!

JoJoJoJoJoJoJoJoJoJoJoJoJoJoJoJoJo!

Please let me read JoJo.

Please let me read Japanese manga.

I crave Japanese culture.

I crave Japanese language.

JoJooooooooooooooooooo!

◊

Hey, Eita.

Come to think of it, this is the first time I've ever written a letter to you.

Even though I've already sent you a thousand and seventy eight text messages; this is strange.

Don't give me that look! When I was little, I was an absolute beast at writing letters.

My father was strict, so he didn’t let me own a cellphone.

Back then, the only way I was connected to Japan was through letters.

Right now, I’m not in Japan.

I’m in Sweden, where my father’s work headquarters are.

Because my phone was confiscated, writing letters is the only communication method I have left.

That's right, just like how it was back when I was a kid.

That's why I wrote this letter to you.

Well, where should I start...?

There are a lot of things I never had a chance to tell you, and also a lot of things I always wanted to tell you about.

I guess I’ll start with how I grew up.

You could also say that was the story about 「how I came to love Jojo that much」.

My mother was born in a Northern Europe country[1]. I heard that she fell in love at first sight with my father, a Japanese entrepreneur, and ran off to Japan all while ignoring the protests of her family.

I actually have almost no knowledge about the country Mother grew up in.

Because mother has never once told me about her homeland.

Surely, it was because she didn't want to remember.

In Hanenoyama City, the famous Natsukawa family property assets are well known; this was the family I was raised in.

Even though my memory is vague, at the very least I can confidently say I was happy. Never mind the part about my family's wealth, the most important thing was that I was always together with mother.[2]

However, back then I had almost no chance to interact with my father.[3]

From time to time, I would see him from afar while he spoke to mother or the servants.

My father dislikes children.

Apparently he even gave an order to keep me away from him.

Back then, I thought 「it's supposed to be like this」, so when I got to see a real family in kindergarten, it was a real shock.

That kid was going home with his father!

He got to play with him!

His father even piggy-backed him!

That said, I never found myself unhappy.

Ahh, I'm different from 「Normal」— I came to that conclusion.

When I was in kindergarten, my mother took me and left the Natsukawa household.

The reason was because my father had an affair with another woman from another country.

Even though my life changed from living in a spacious mansion to a small apartment, I still felt blessed. As long as I was still together with my mother, it was fine no matter where it was.

My mother, she really loved manga.

Particularly the the kind aimed to young boys: Shounen manga.

In Japan, it was called 「JUMP」— she proudly told me. [4]

As if she was reading a picture book, she would read it together with me.

My favorite one was————

Eita. Since it's you, you should know by now, right?

It’s JoJo.

Even though back then I couldn’t read most of the Kanji, I could understand just by looking at the pictures.

It had an impact that is unlike any other.

When my mother read JoJo, it was especially the best.

She would even read the sound effects for me.

ズキュウウウウン!Zukyuuuun

メメタァ!Memetaa

ゴゴゴゴゴ!GOGOGOGO

メギャン!Megyan [5]

I was very happy to be able to live with my mother like this every day.

However, whenever I wasn't around, my mother would cry.

Even though she always smiled in front of me, come to think of it — I can't even count how my times this happened.

If only I realized it more back then.

If only I treated her more kindly back then.

If I had, maybe we wouldn't have been separated like that.

When I was seven, my father suddenly visited our apartment.

I can freshly remember my mother’s reaction even now.

When my father spoke his name through the apartment’s intercom, she immediately jumped with joy.

She grabbed my hand and danced like a little girl.

She still loved him, my father.

Because my mother was happy back then, I was happy too. Thinking back to it now gives me a mixed feeling.

Because, the person my father came to see was not my mother, *it was me*.

My father mentioned he wanted to bring me away with him.

His work headquarters would be moved to Sweden, and he needed to enlarge his social network there. To grant this objective, I could be of use — I guess this was what he meant. Back then, I couldn't understand why having me there would be any good.

Even though I'd go with him for the time being, he'd bring my mother along after we settled.

The three of us can gather as a family overseas again.

— I remember father saying something like that.

But I absolutely didn't want to go.

Because, wasn't he just some「old guy that I didn't know」?[6]

In school, we're taught 「don't follow strangers no matter how they ask」, so why should I follow him overseas?

However, my mother said this:

「Masuzu, you will be happier if you are raised as a child of the Natsukawa family」.

「Mommy will follow you right away, so be sure to wait for me there」.

I believed in those words, and I followed my father to Sweden.

The environment there was not unlike the original Natsukawa mansion; it

was as big as a castle. There were also a lot of servants.

First, I studied English and Swedish.

Then, I learned table manners. I was taught so thoroughly that I would never forget the right way to use chopsticks.

Piano, violin and ballet; I studied those until I was accomplished at them.

Since I never went to school there, I don’t really remember what Swedish people look like.

Since my three family tutors were always next to me, I hardly ever got the chance to leave my home.

In a life like this, I would always write letters to my mother.

She would also reply right away.

If her reply was delivered in a big envelope, it meant that there was a JoJo volume in it.

If my father found out, he would probably make me get rid of it, so I'd hide them under the bed.

When everyone was asleep, I would read JoJo with a small lantern. Back then, this was my only interest. Eita, if it's you, I’m you sure can understand how I looked forward to this?

However, even though a long time passed, my mother never came.

Even though I asked her about it in my letters, she would never mention it in her reply.

Even if I asked my father, he would try to change and avoid the topic.

After several futile attempts of bringing this up in the letters, I gave up.

About a year later, I was forced to perform on my father’s stage.

I took part in a family party that the high-class people participate in.

Even though the event wasn't as big as those high-class parties held in Paris, this was an important place for my father to expand his social relationships.

There, I was introduced to someone unexpected.

It was my father's second wife.

Also, her daughter. A younger sister born from another mother.

Yes, the one you already know. That blonde twin-tailed kid.

That Mana.

「Onei-chan! Nise to meet you! My name ish Mana!」

She greeted me with such half-baked Japanese, I almost had a headache.

Her mother never met my eyes.

So I did the same.

My father gave us his orders.

「I don't care what you guys think deep inside, I only want you all to act as a happy family with me here.」

That speech, made me realize.

He never had the intention of bringing my mother over.

I had to ask him about something.

「If you want us to pretend to be an family, it should be enough with just those two people!」

「Why should I participate in your act?」

My father replied with a kind face.

「Because Masuzu, you are as pretty as a diamond.」

「That's a lie! What kind of reason is that?!」

「There is no lie here. I brought over my beautiful「ex-wife's child」and raised her properly, and also made her form a good relationship with my second wife. A man like that would be praised and trusted in society. Don't you think so?」

What do you think, Eita?

You can't believe it, right?

Someone who could so bluntly put together such an artificial facade, could only be a villain.

To gain a good reputation, he formed a false familyFake. This is that man.

— *But I refuse*.[7]

During the party, I silently stood without uttering a word with my back to my father's, as I learned from Jojo.[8]

The result of pulling that kind of stunt, was house arrest for one month.

I was locked in the second floor of the house, and I was not allowed to even get close to the stairs.

Which meant, I couldn't deliver any letters to my mother.

While I was locked in my room, Mana came.

She came with sparkling eyes.

That kid, she was related to that villain, so I got angry.

「Onei-chan, are you okway?」

「You don’t need to force yourself to speak Japanese. I can understand English at the very least.」

「*But* , I, have, a Jahpanese shister. So I letsh speak on Jahpanese!」

「—is that so? Then I shall teach you some *wonderful Japanese*.」

「*Really*? Mana whill remember it! *What is it*!」

「Carve it into your flesh and bones!! 仙道波蹴ッ!Sendou Wave Kick!」[9]

「Gywan-! Onei-chan kicked me!」

Come to think of it, that was when we started to be in bad terms.

Mana’s mother came in a while later.

She had the same blonde hair and blue eyes.

She was as beautiful as a Hollywood star, but on the inside she wasn't anything even close to pretty. She was that type of woman.

「Just so that you know, I don’t love Ryuuji」.

「What I love is the Ryuuji's money and family fortune. And he knows this too」.

Just why did you suddenly just pop up to say something like that? My eyes turned into dazed tiny dots.

「It would be good if you too, could also do the same.」

「You have things you desire, right? You can use Ryuuji to make it happen.」

「ーーーーーーーーーーー」

That train of thought really made a deep impression on me. I was shocked.

I decided to negotiate with my father.

「If I act my role as a jewel perfectly, will you let me go back to my mother?」

He accepted my conditions right away.

From that point onward, I became the 「Eldest daughter of the Natsukawa Family」 and acted elegantly.

It didn't matter who it was, I demonstrated perfect behavior. I acted accordingly to the standard of a good child. To avoid expose my cunning nature, I acted childishly from time to time too.

Mana's mother also acted as a fine wife and mother in front of everyone.

Mana still acted however she liked, but then I was able to take care of her and improve my image as a good sister. In the eyes of the world, it was a beautiful relationship.

But in reality, we were all just fakes.

Things went according to my father's plan, and society viewed the Natsukawa family in high regard.

We dealt more and more with people of authority, everyone gathered at our home. This was how my father built his connections in Sweden.

How is that? Eita.

Did your image of me change a little?

My 「fake」 visage was certainly perfect... overseas.

I was actually the biggest reason for attracting successful business, the source of the wealth of my family.

But somehow, I couldn't pull it off when it came to tricking you.

I wonder what I did wrong……?

About two years later, something shocking happened.

The letters and JoJo volumes from my mother stopped.

Even though I received them frequently and without fail ever since we separated.

My mother wouldn't forget about something as important as this.

「Father, did you hide Mother’s letter?」

「Impossible, I wouldn't do such a thing.」

「You’re lying! You definitely hid them!」

「Don’t trouble me, my jewel. What good would that bring me?」

I could no longer read what happened in JoJo anymore.

The last volume she sent me was the part where Polnareff became a turtle!

What will happen to my Polnareff-kun!?[10]

I decided to escape from this place.

By avoiding my father's eyes and gaining help from the servants, I got myself a ticket to Japan.

After being separated for three years, it was finally time to reunite with my mother.

I used the key card that I had preciously saved to get into the house.

The house —— was empty.

The luggage, the furniture… almost everything was gone.

Only the volumes of JoJo were left in the corner of the room.

While I was shocked, the phone that was left behind in the living room rang.

「Are you satisfied now? Masuzu.」

It was my father’s voice.

Everything had been on the palm of his hand the whole time.

「Where did you take my mother?!」

At that time, I really wished I could kill people just with my voice.

「I don’t know.」

「You’re lying. You chased her away didn’t you!」

「I repeat, I don't know. It looks like she left of her own volition.」

「I can’t believe those words. As a father, you're nothing but a liar.」[11]

「·····Well, it's true. It's just like you said.」

It was a voice that seemed to say, 'I give up'.[12]

「Anyways, Masuzu, come back next Sunday. I have a meeting with a Japanese cabinet minister. To expand my business, you’re required.」

It took a considerable amount of effort to hold back my urge to throw the phone.

This man was still like this to the very end…

But, back then.

I remembered what Mana's mother told me.

「I understand, Father. I’ll do what you tell me to.」

「Thanks, that's helpful.」

「I will work hard for the Natsukawa family. But, can I request something in exchange for my work? 」

「What do you mean?」

「Give and take, this is the basic of business right?」

If I attacked without a plan, my father definitely would not tell me the whereabouts of my mother.

I could only look for her myself.

I needed to increase my status, therefore I needed results.

I need to increase my status until my father could ignore me, until he accepted me.

I worked harder as my father’s tool.

I don't remember exactly when, but I started being called the 「Jewel of the Natsukawa Family.」

Time flew, and it was October last year.

「Father, I have a request.」

「What is it?」

「I want to return to Japan next spring, and attend Hanenoyama High School.」

My father, of course, didn’t give me a good look.

「I think I still want you to continue acting as a helpful hand at my side, Masuzu.」

「But, you don’t have intentions of staying in Sweden forever, right?」

「Of course, once I have trained someone that I can trust, I will head back to Japan.」

「Then, why not let me go back first? I'll spread my name as the “Jewel of the Natsukawa Family” at Hanenoyama City where we were originally lived; this doesn't sound like a bad idea at all, right?」

My father was silent in deep thoughts.

「I normally wouldn’t allow this but— Masuzu, you have worked hard for the Natsukawas. As your reward, I will give you special permission to do so」.

「Thank you very much.」

「But, I’ll say this first. Forget about *that*. It's for your own good.」

Hmph.

As the person who got rid of mother, what could he possibly say?

That was how I got back to Hanenoyama city.

I stayed at the apartment where I once lived with my mother.

If I wait here, mother will definitely come back.

Why? Because, she left these JoJo volumes here.

「Read these volumes while you wait for me.」

Surely, this was the message that my mother left here.

You already know what happened from there on, Eita.

I went to study at Hanenoyama High School, the place where I met you all.

I was shocked when I spoke to you.

There was actually a man who could keep up with my JoJo references!

Because my mother read to me the first and second parts, most of my references were centered around the「Ripple Arc」. It's odd if you think about it, since the name Jojo is strongly representative of the stand battles. Of course I also really like Jotaro, Josuke, Giorno, Jolyne, Gyro and Jousuke, but the ones who taught me about life are Jonathan and Joseph.[13]

That's why, when we were at the pool and you told me that reference from the second part, *I was really happy.*

Discussing the manga you really like with someone, really could be *that fun*.

I never knew.

Yet, you were always so indifferent.

You always acted cold towards me, and always ran off to the side of that childhood friend.

That was why I tied you up. I tied you up with a chain called BoyfriendFake.

Just like how my father tied me up with my family name, I tied you up.

Ufufu. It serves you right.

But in the end, you broke the chain by yourself.

I never expected Akishino-san would be the one to say that. 「People can grow」, I probably forgot Jonathan’s words. At that time, my defeat was already settled.

A fake, can *never* beat the real thing.

At most, all I managed to do was to mess up your long relationship with Harusaki-san.

No, or should it be said that perhaps my existence improved your relationship with her?

How ironic.[14]

How, foolish.

This should be what they call a punishment.

The punishment for deceiving Harusaki-san.

This is what a fake gets after deceiving the real thing.

After everything I did, it should be natural that I fall to hell.

But, Eita.

To be alone in hell, it's too cold.

To fall into hell together with you, that doesn't sound bad at all.

◇

◆

This is a letter written by Masuzu; which never reached Eita.

Before putting the letter into the send box, Masuzu herself tore it to pieces.

At that very same same time, her inner will towards *something* strengthened.

Translator notes and references

- How she phrased it, it can be Scandinavia or any norther Europe country
- she calls her Oka-san if you are wondering
- she calls him 父 , chichi or oto are my guesses (no honorific)
- Jump is a publishing label for shounen manga, I doubt that you don't know about it.
- Those are all sound effects so they don't have a proper translation. Do a image search for each if you are interesting, they will lead you to many iconic scenes
- calls him shiranai ojii-san here
- she uses a legendary Jojo line that evolved into a meme here, it's だが断る
- It's a pun here, "Stands" are called as such because they (normally) "stand" behind their user. Normally stands have no personality and can't interact with others; they can't been seen by people without stands and users can't even seen them unless they realize they have it, so she is acting as a stand
- This is a move from Will Anthonio Zeppeli, he was also teaching it at the time (but not to the receiver). The move is actually a jumping knee, like what Masuzu is doing.
- If you are wondering, this is a spoiler for part 5. Actually, the fact that Polnareff is in *is* already a spoiler for the late game of part 5
- She has been calling him Otou-san for a while, if you are wondering
- He was talking about not having any veracity, he isn't admitting having kicked the mother out; thus he realized that he can't convince her
- Ok, clearing time. "Stand Battle" is commonly referred as the parts where you battle with stands, Here Natsukawa lists the main characters from part 3 to 8 as "I also really like" (the exception being Gyro, who is

the mentor of the Jojo instead of the actual lead (though he has for about as much protagonism as the lead does)). The reason of why "Josuke" is listed twice, it's because there are 2 leads named Josuke, but use different kanji (which is what Masuzu used on the list). The first one is 仗助 and the second one is 定助 ; they are both read as "Jousuke" but I took a small liberty to tell them apart. Joseph and Jonathan are -of course- the leads of part 1 & 2 respectively

- Her wording here denotes anger

#1: School Festival leads to Mayhem

#1 学園祭が修羅場

修羅これくしょん
～修羅これ～

駆逐艦

春咲

火力	18
雷装	57
対空	20
装甲	60
主力兵装	12.7cm焼餅砲

艦隊型駆逐艦の最高峰、春咲だよーん。
40ノットの快速で海原を駆けめぐるの。
ちっちゃなボディでも空母には負けないんだから！
ただし食費、もとい燃費はかかるからね！

As the end of October carried us into late autumn, the air temperature changed from「cool」to「frigid」.

I, Kidou Eita, was faced with my first school festival since I entered Hanenoyama High School.

I had originally expected that the school festival would be「spectacular」, or something exciting along the lines of what I had in my imagination. However, to use the words of my childhood friend, Harusaki Chiwa, “Isn't this quite ordinary?” In anime and manga, there were always all sorts of unusual booths at festivals, but these unusual booths don't exist in reality. A great majority of the stalls were completely occupied with simple sausage vendors, yakisoba vendors, donut vendors, and popcorn vendors; the kind of stalls that were guaranteed to show up at festivals. Also, there were small skits, stand-up comedies, and other totally ordinary programs in the rest area.

We in the「Society for Bringing Out Your Maiden Self」(Jien-Otsu for short), were hosting a maid cafe.

You could say this idea was the king of all kings, although to be frank it's hardly a novel idea—

"Ei-kun, two orders of hot coffee, woofwoof~"

Chiwa, as a puppy maid, rushed into the impromptu kitchen that we had set up inside a science laboratory using dividers.

Although I wanted to scold her about whether it was ONE (woof) or TWO, I remembered we were in a maid cafe setting, so no, it really didn't make a difference how she spoke.

"What about the iced red tea from earlier, woof?"

"I'm making it now. You can bring that tray over."

"There's no more ice, so what'll we do?"

"There's ice in the freezer."

I responded as I placed paper cups on the trays that were lined up on the table.

"Himecchi's booth idea was a huge success ♪"

"Yeah. That girl is really amazing, honestly."

The person who came up the idea for the maid cafe was Hime. Akishino Himeka was also the one who planned it all.

When we just started preparing, it didn't go so smoothly, and we ran into roadblocks like the rule: 「First-years are strictly prohibited from using fire, gas, and also portable electric stoves」. In the end, the school gave the OK only when Kaoru, the secretary of the student council, proposed that we use an electric boiler. But right after that, we ran into another roadblock. Due to our bad luck, we were assigned to a science laboratory next to the gymnasium, which was a huge distance away from the main gate. It would be very hard to attract guests to come.

Then, Hime brought a lot of additional assets for us to use in the cafe.

"I originally thought that a maid cafe wouldn't be anything special, but I never expected there would be this many guests."

"This isn't your ordinary maid cafe. It's an animal-themed maid cafe."

"See, look!" Chiwa turned around in a circle as she said this. The tail that was pinned behind her skirt wagged back and forth.

Chiwa's character was a「Dog Maid」. Complete with dog ears, a tail, and fluffy round gloves, it looked that Chiwa had fully transformed into a「puppy!」. It was seriously shocking.

"Himecchi is really amazing—I never knew she could make tails like these."

"She said that a dressmaker from a tailoring school that frequented her hotel came to teach her."

"Even so, she's still incredible. The embroidery is extremely beautiful. She must be really good with her hands."

We rented the maid uniforms using Saeko-san's connections, but Hime made all the accessories from scratch. She made a different character for each of the four members of our club, and the quality was so high that Saeko-san later asked,“Tell me where I can buy these!”

Although it was a set of accessories, in the end we didn't couple it together with the clothes.

"Hey Chiwa! What are you slacking off for, woohaha!"

A monkey, no, Fuyuumi Ai appeared.

The ears and tail that she wore was similar to Chiwa's, but there was heart-shaped embroidery on the back of her skirt. It was very interesting, just like it was mimicking the red butt cheeks of a monkey.

"I had a feeling you were acting all friendly in the back with Kidou-kun, so I ran over here to check. I never expected my expectations to be right on target, woohaha—! When you're finished with your order, come back out here right away woohaha—!"

With the suffixes that she added at the end of every single one of her lines, she sounded like she was always angry and in shambles. Though, in reality, she most likely was truly angry.

“Woofwoofwoof ♪,” Chiwa responded as she picked up her tray and headed back out into the cafe.

The monkey maid muttered, “She's so unreasonable,” as she watched Chiwa leave. Then, she leaned against my shoulder and crooned. "Hey, Ta-kun. Is the「Super ~ Sugar, Love, and Cream Coffee」that I ordered earlier done yet? ♪"

In my opinion, this girl was definitely the most unreasonable one of them all.

Her lovestruck brain was basically an explosion.

"I'm terribly sorry, we're sold out of love."

"Then, do you need me to help you replenish some? I can supplement some Ai Love Sauce!"

I coldly responded that it didn't make logical sense at all. She was such a stubborn girl. No, more accurately she didn't listen to anyone.

"Now that you mention it—that girl never ended up coming?"

Fuyuumi's face became veiled with a thin layer of shadow.

"She never came. I think Himecchi tried to send her another text earlier, but there was no respond. She never contacted Ta-kun either?"

"No, definitely not."

No matter whether I sent her text messages or called her phone, there was no response. Even when I called the landline to her apartment, no one picked up.

Also, ever since that day, that girl never came back to school. She was not present for mid-term exams.

When I asked the teacher, she said it was ‘family matters’.

“That's what they told us, though to be honest they should have contacted us in advance. It's disappointing how they kept us out of the loop.”

"I think it's because that girl's family is really complicated."

I could only reply like that.

Because, in my heart, I thought I had an idea.

That girl, she had seen Chiwa and me kiss at my house for a moment.

When I saw that the Chuuni notebook had been returned to me and ensuing text message “Our contract is over,” I could more or less figure everything out.

Idiot. At least let me explain, you JoJo-obsessed girl

I watched Fuyuumi walk back out front, and I gave a sigh.

Well, now that my agreement to be her fake boyfriend was over, there was probably no point to worry over it.

Also, that girl said it very clearly.

—*What I need is a ⌈boyfriend⌋, not Kidou Eita.*

For now, let's not mention whether she truly said that from the bottom of her heart.

In other words, she very clearly instructed me “Don't you dare try to pry into my heart.”

Even if I wanted to do something for her, I felt like I would only hurt her dearly in the end.

"It's so hard……"

"Certainly."

The sudden voice caused me to turn my head around, and I found myself faced with a rabbit maid.

It was Hime.

"It’s probably my fault that President didn't come. I feel like I need to bear all the responsibility."

Her long white rabbit ears seemed to wilt without energy.

"It's not your fault. She'll come back sooner or later."

Ever since we stayed together this summer, that girl has been very restless. Under this dangerous mood, I guess she couldn't imagine what it would be like if we maintained this lie for three years.

"Well, rather than worrying about this right now, we should make this cafe a

dazzling experience. We have quite a lot customers, right?"

Hime seemed very happy as she nodded her head.

"The room is fully packed. And the line extends all the way into the hallway. If this continues, we might even take first place."

At the end of the festival, there was going to be a popularity contest for each club or class's stall or event. And our goal was to take first place.

"So, let's get a move on it. Here, three cups of red tea."

"Assignment acknowledged."

The long frills of her Hime's skirt and tail swayed as she ran out.

I returned to work in the kitchen.

The person who wanted us to attain first place in the popularity contest was that, *that girl's* goal, in the first place.

When that girl comes back, we'll show her some results that she'll be so awed to see, she won't even be able to speak.

◆

By afternoon, everything became even busier.

"Ei-kun, three of the hot ones!"

"Ta-kun, four cups of iced red tea!"

"Eita, two cups of iced red tea and one cup of iced coffee, plus also this, and make sure it's without that, and also without that or that."

As I memorized the orders that rushed in, I basically became a tea-making machine endlessly working.

This is getting quite bad.……

The line had gotten so long it looked like it was going to block the entrance beside the kitchen.

You couldn't even say that our customer service was good. Although Hime had experience helping around her family hotel and worked really hard, Chiwa and Fuyuumi were both extremely clumsy. I also never had experience boiling so many cups of coffee and tea, so the taste of each cup probably differed a lot.

"Ei-kun, are there any more tea snacks?"

Chiwa put the biscuit that we had been using as a decoration onto a paper plate. Her words gave me a shock of surprise.

"There should be more, right? Try looking over there. There should be some more in that cardboard box."

"There isn't. It's flat out empty." Chiwa flipped open the cardboard box to show me. "Earlier, when the football club kept asking for more snacks, could that be why we're out?”

"Those bastards. Just because they figured it was free, they just shamelessly closed their eyes and wolfed them down……"

We even especially went out to a specialty supermarket that sold large portions, but it looked like the athletic clubs one-upped us with their appetite.

"Well, if we run out of refreshments, will we keep on running the cafe?"

"But, on the flier, it says「Free Refreshments」."

If it came to us not living up to our advertised reputation, it would probably severely impact the results of the popularity contest.

"I'll run out to buy some. Chiwa, please help me watch the kitchen."

"T-There's no way I can do that! If I walk away right now, the cafe will totally collapse!"

Just then, Fuyuumi rushed inside.

"Ta-kun, please! Two cups of iced coffee! Chiwa, send some hot water to table number two!"

"I need to send these hot drinks to table number three. What about Himecchi?"

"She's manning the cash register. To be honest, there's actually only two of us waiting on the guests in the cafe. There's no time for any kind of break."

"……How troublesome……"

To be honest, it wasn't just the refreshments. There wasn't very much stock left for making coffee either.

"Can’t we ask Kaoru to help us go buy some?" Fuyuumi suggested this.

"He said he had to take care of things in the student council office. What about you? Can you ask a friend in the disciplinary committee to help us?"

"I can't. With the patrols and writing people up for violations, they're already busy enough. When evening comes, even I'll have to go and help them out."

"Then…"

While I was considering asking a certain someone else, Chiwa crossed her arms in an X in front on her chest. At this point, we really were isolated without any help.

"Well, if we run out of coffee, then we really will have to say we're sold out."

"That's true. I think the popcorn stall from class three is also sold out."

What the two of them said was definitely true, but for some reason I wanted us to last until the very end.

Because if we're sold out, that girl definitely won't come.

"Master ~ Chiwawa ~ Please leads these guests to their seats~"

Hime seemed to be in lament as her calls echoed over, and Chiwa and Fuyuumi hurried returned to their positions.

As I returned to my state of operating the tea boiler, I wonder if there was any way we could solve this situation.

Was there really no one we could ask to help us buy things?

This definitely isn't anything to boast about, but I really don't have many friends. I could count on one hand the number of classmates I've exchanged my email address with.

Even so, perhaps there was someone who'd come help us.

I silently placed all my hopes onto the principle of friendship, and I opened my text messages and typed something.

I stood there blankly for a little bit, and soon enough the beeps of incoming text messages sounded.

【 Subject 】Re: please help

【 Content 】Hahaha, you really do know how to make a joke!

【 Subject 】please stop the jokes, okay?

【 Content 】A supernatural being who has tons of beautiful girlfriends?

Asking me for help? lol

【 Subject 】salty nori

【 Content 】sorry, im busy eating potato chips and cant leave

【 Subject 】Re: please help

【 Content 】Waaaah, my chronic cavities are hurting up again……

I quietly closed my phone.

Hmph……

So my friends really were just trash.

All I had was my studies. Studying is the absolute justice.

"Is such a majestically grown man crying right now?"

"I-I'm definitely not crying!"

I turned my head around, and there was a maid dressed as a white cat standing there.

"……"

I was absolutely stunned, and I couldn't utter the slightest noise.

Contrasting against the fundamentally black maid uniform, those white cat ears and silver hair somehow seemed to be a perfect match. The tail that extended out of her skirt moved in a circle, and it seemed to bring a sense of honest feelings and a little tender love.

This maid that overflowed with charm made me unable to stop myself from reporting this situation to the others but—

"What's wrong, Eita-kun? You look like you've seen a ghost, hm?"

Natsukawa Masuzu gave smiled innocently as she spoke.

This was just like the Masuzu who'd「pretend to be a good kitty cat」. [1]

"Where have you been this entire time!?"

"Something came up at home. Actually, I only flew back from Sweden yesterday."

Because they heard Masuzu's voice, Chiwa and the rest of them rushed into

the kitchen one by one.

"President, you're back!?"

The first one to rush forward was Hime.

"This maid uniform suits me very well. Thank you for going out of your way to send it to my house."

Masuzu smiled as she spoke and hugged the teary-eyed Hime.

As Fuyuumi watched these two, she nodded「Mhm, mhm」, while she wiped her nose. I handed my handkerchief to her, but she turned her head away.

"Natsukawa."

Chiwa took one step forward.

Masuzu also left Hime's side and took a step forward.

"You're late."

"I've caused a lot trouble. I'm very sorry."

There was no smile on either of their faces, but there also wasn't any trace of anger.

And just like that, Chiwa's conversation with Masuzu ended.

It was so blunt that Hime, Fuyuumi, and I were all stunned.

"Alright, let's get ourselves hyped up again. Eita-kun will go out and buy things, and Fuyuumi-san will replace Eita and work in the kitchen. Harusaki-san and I will take care of the guests in the main cafe, while Akishino-san will be in charge of the cash register and helping out in the kitchen."

Even though she had just arrived, Masuzu had perfectly grasped an understanding of the present situation.

“Once Eita-kun returns, he'll immediately go to work in the kitchen and give Fuyuumi-san a thorough break. After that, everyone will take turns to rest.

After all, if we receive guests with exhausted faces, it won't reflect well on our evaluations. —Right, we will definitely take first place…Now then, let's get moving!" Masuzu clapped her hands, and we all got to action.

In this kind of situation, she really made you think「she's really an incredible president」. Although she wasn't great at her own actions, she was simply unmatchable when leading others.

After I grabbed my wallet and started running through the hallways, I couldn't stop thinking.

Once the school festival ends, I'll need to have a proper talk with Masuzu.

It didn't matter if it was about being a fake boyfriend, or the thing about Chiwa's kiss.

And also with what happened today, I needed to properly talk things over until both of us understood each other.

I also needed to carefully pay attention so that I didn't disturb my「girlfriend's」very delicate state of mind.

Then, I needed to clearly express my intentions to her.

Although I was contemplating all sorts of these troubling things, to be honest, I did also feel a little bit of this other emotion, too.

A happy feeling.

◆

Later, during the popularity contest at the evening of the festival, we from「Jien-Otsu」beautifully seized first place.

Although the detailed statistics of the vote weren't released yet, we easily obtained at least seventy percent of all the male votes. They're probably all

Masuzu fans, after all. In the comments section of the voting ballot, most of them were about Masuzu:

「Masuzu's absolutely dazzling when she's wearing a maid uniform.」

「This was the first time Masuzu ever spoke to me! She even looked at me!」

「The coffee that this white cat angel brought had the flavor of eternal bliss.」

Technically, I was the one who made the coffee, but everyone seemed so happy I decided not to mention it. Now that you mention it, when we read out a comment from some girl that said, 「the little rabbit that was at the cash register was really cute」, Hime shyly covered her cheeks with her hands. It was really a sight to see.

In the middle of the festival's evening, we slipped away and held a small-scale party in the club room.

"Cheeeeeeers—!"

I downed the fruit juice in my paper cup with one gulp, and gave a 「puhaaaaa—!」 of satisfaction. Fuyuumi wasn't here because of disciplinary committee work, which was a shame, but we'd hold the party again anyways.

"A special shout out to Akishino-san for being the one who made this happen."

Masuzu said, which made Hime's face turn even redder.

"Hahahaha, Himecchi, this is only fruit juice, you know? It's not alcohol—?"

"I deny this. This must be a secret drink of the Wyvernians. They must have swapped it with my drinkahhh."

Her usual chuunibyou was utterly smashed. Himeka really was so cute!

"Now then, Masuzu, will you be coming back to school now?"

I took advantage of the nice atmosphere and carelessly asked her.

But then Masuzu's expression suddenly turned serious.

"No. I'm returning to Sweden."

…...Huh?

"You could say that this school festival was to be the peak of my glory. It was an honor that everyone bestowed onto me, and it really made me happy."

An empty paper cup slipped from Hime's hand and fell.

As it collided with the floor, it gave a ⌜thunk⌟, pulling me back to my senses.

"W-Why are you transferring schools right now?! It's too sudden to transfer in the middle of the second semester!"

"Who knows? After all, it's all my father's influence."

Masuzu spoke casually as if she were talking about someone else.

"Why do you have to obey everything that your father says?! Don't tell me you actually want to go live over there?!"

".....That's impossible." Masuzu's voice became low and viscous. "I also don't want to live in an influential family. However, my father's commands are absolute. I can only obey him……"

"If that's the case, I want to you stay here!" Hime shouted with a loud voice. "If President wants to stay here, then I want you to stay here. As long as you properly talk it out with your father, I think he'll definitely understand!"

"He's not that kind of an angel. Don't you remember? Before summer vacation, he did a lot of despicable things to try and take me back home."

"But you made it through that time! Right, why don't you ask Mana to help say something?"

"I'll also try and ask Mana for help. That's why, President, don't give up!"

"All of your good intentions really make me happy, but……"

Masuzu seemed to look very uncomfortable as she lowered her gaze.

Just then, Chiwa, who hadn't said a word until now, spoke up.

"—Hey, Natsukawa, when are you going to drop the act?"

There seemed to be a sparkle in Chiwa's eyes.

I knew those eyes. Those were eyes that Chiwa had only when she was together with her best friends. But its aura was slightly different. It was a serious expression that she often had long ago when she was active in the girls kendo club in the dojo.

If you put these two together, you could say it was……. What was going on?

Masuzu gently smiled.

"Recently, Harusaki-san's been so difficult to handle. How did you know?"

"I guess you could say it's animal instinct. I've been dealing with you for half a year already, so it seems like I've started to understand Natsukawa."

Although the two of them were smiling at each other, I had no clue what had just happened. Hime's mouth was also open in a daze.

"I lied. Actually, it was all a lie." Masuzu spoke simply. "After I talked it over with my father, he decided to let me do whatever I wanted. He agreed to let me stay in Hanenoyama City until I graduated."

"R-Really? Is that true?"

"It was too simple, so I thought I'd tease you all a little. I'm sorry."

Hime hit Masuzu's shoulders with her fists.

And she hit them again and again.

"You scared me to death! You scared me to death! You scared me to death! You seriously scared me to death!"

Hime, on the verge of crying, kept repeating ⌜scared me to death⌟, and

Masuzu in response followed with multiple ⌜I'm sorry⌟'s.

Chiwa gave a slight smile as she watched the two of those like that.

…….*Seriously, don't scare me like that.*

In other words, this was Masuzu-san's top notch ⌜faking⌟. I was totally tricked.

Masuzu jumped away from Hime's beating fists, and in the mean time took the liberty to say something in addition.

"Also from earlier, my relationship with Eita-kun as boyfriend and girlfriend ended. Now both of us are incorrigibly single individuals."

I felt like a sneak attack had been launched against me.

I never expected she would publicize our situation at this sort of time.

This time, Chiwa had a totally astonished expression on her face.

"I-Is that true, Ei-kun? Why didn't you tell me?"

"I actually wasn't quite sure what happened, because all she did was send a one-sided text message."

I looked at Masuzu and spoke. "Hey, do you really want to break up?"

"It's not because I hate you…… but it's not going to work out, if it keeps continuing like this."

I figured she meant that we had reached the limit of ⌜faking⌟. When Hime found out about it, it was already over.

Masuzu, she finally understood.

…….However, I didn't think I accepted it completely yet.

"Let's talk about this later, okay? We need to clear up the misunderstandings between us."

"......I understand.

Masuzu didn't meet my eyes as she said this.

Chiwa watched the Masuzu that acted like this.

She looked like she wanted to say something, but she ended up staying in her seat.

Hime was also incredibly flustered. She kept raising her hand part way and then putting it down, continuously glancing back and forth between Masuzu and me.

—Just then.

"I see. So that's what happened."

As I turned my head to the source of the noise, Fuyuumi Ai was leaning against the door to the club room.

Although I didn't know exactly what she understood, she kept nodding her head while saying,“Mhm, mhm”.

The four of our eyes met and she gave a flirtatious「wink ♪」toward me.

As I wondered whether there was some sand caught in her eye, she gave a huge stretch with her arms.

"My era is coming!"

—Definitely not!

Translator notes and references

- I believe this is a Japanese idiom of sorts, similar to a wolf dressed in sheep's clothing.

Chapter 2: Breaking up Leads to mayhem

#2 別れ話は修羅場

「パチレモン」12月号・メリークリスマス特別付録

聖夜もやるぅ♥モテカワ度テスト!

ペンネーム「かわゆいチワワ」さんの回答

Q1：サンタの正体ってなんだろうね?

A1：あたしのパパとえーくんのパパ。一年交替で。

Q2：ホワイトクリスマス! 彼とどんな雪遊びを?

A2：かまくらの中でおもちいりの豚汁!

Q3：彼にあげたいプレゼントは?

A3：松坂牛

Q4：彼からもらいたいプレゼントは?

A4：米沢牛

Q5：ずばり、あなたにとってクリスマスとは?

A5：ビーフもいいけどチキンもね、な日

あなたのクリスマスは：食べすぎ!

パチレモン編集部より：チワワさんブレないわー

After the dismissal of the congratulatory party.

Seven o’ clock in the evening, I went to the usual café to meet up with Masuzu.

The waitress walked towards me, with a spring in her step.

“Welcome! Is a cup of coke alright for you?”

“……Yes.”

“Please go to that seat right over there! Your partner is already waiting for you—!”

She is familiar with everything concerning us. Has it finally reached this state after five months?

Masuzu sat beside the window as usual.

She looked bored, looking at an art album while swiping her silver hair upwards with her white hands. The small café in this small town looks like a trendy café in a foreign country just with her sitting there. The fact that she was looking at the “Jojoveller” art book is a flaw that can be disregarded.

Masuzu saw me, and smiled.

“Take a seat?”

“Alright.”

I hardened my heart and sat down, ignoring the whispers of “I wish for your fortune in the battle[1]” from the waitress behind me.

“Eita-kun, have you slimmed down?”

“Hmm? Really……”

I touched my cheeks. Since I only measure my weight when I go to the public bath, I am not too sure about it.

“Maybe it’s because the midterm exams and school festival kept me busy.”

“How did you place in the midterms?”

“…second.”

The first place was taken by my classmate, Mogami Yura, again.

I wasn’t feeling well to begin with, and coupled with a few careless mistakes, this became one of the exams I regretted the most. I must have my revenge in the finals. Now that the school festival is over, I shall start working like a fool again now.

“Oh, and, why are you talking this way?”

“This way?”

“Isn’t this how you talked to me when we first went out?”

Not long before the summer holidays, Masuzu started calling me “Eita” without honorifics, but under the condition that she would only use it when we are alone together.

But, the way she is talking right now is just like Chiwa and the girls are around us.

“Because we are no longer lovers, so I added the honorific “kun” just like before.”

Just because of this.

“You said you wanted to remove the fake relationship, are you serious about this? Is this really alright?”

Masuzu looked surprised.

“You were the one who said that we can’t continue doing this, right? Didn’t you say that to Akishino-san?”

“Weren’t you against that at the time?”

“That should be because I was surprised, I’m sorry for losing my head.”

Admitting her mistakes just like this, I can’t continue probing her anymore.

I adjusted my posture, and sipped at my coke. A note was stuck on the saucer, with a circular handwriting, saying “Haste makes waste♥[2]”. What is this, are you a professor of proverbs?

“I left the notebook at your house, do you understand what I meant by that?”

“Ah, I did received that.”

The chuuni-notebook with my black history sealed in it is currently sleeping in a locked safe above my ceiling.

Originally I wanted to burn it, but I can’t get myself to do it no matter what.

It’s not that I still miss my past self.

It’s just that I feel like if I burn it, Masuzu will never return.

“If the word of us breaking up gets out, the storm of confessions will come again, do you have any plans?”

“No, but I will think of one.”

“What is with that……”

Didn’t you want me to become your fake boyfriend because you can’t think of any?

“I don’t want to stir up any more trouble for you and Harusaki-san. Although I am not someone who should be kicked to death by a horse[3] or anything, I still know the limits.”

“……really?”

Although it sounds fairly logical, this line just doesn’t seem to fit this selfish woman.

“Let me ask you something. When you came to return my notebook, was Chiwa in the living room?”

“……”

Masuzu has been maintaining eye contact, but she looked down for a little.

Just by this little gesture, I understood everything. There’s no doubt Masuzu saw what happened that day.

“Because I don’t want you to misunderstand, I will say it first, that is just an accident.”

“Accident?”

“We were arguing whether we should take me to the hospital, and it turned out that way, there is no meaning behind it.”

“So, you didn’t go out with Harusaki-san?”

Masuzu’s blue eyes locked onto my eyes again.

“This is—rather disappointing.”

“Disappointing?”

“I think it would be nice if you can become real lovers with Harusaki-san.”

She’s saying weird stuff again.

Hoping that others’ love life would blossom, this is really rare, coming from someone like Natsukawa Masuzu.

“We are anti-love, we hate, dislike and look down upon lovers. Probably from now, till forever, I will maintain this stance. However, Eita-kun still has a chance.”

“What chance?”

“A chance to become happy[4].”

Masuzu answered, full of passion.

“As someone who was your “girlfriend”, only me, who read the notebook understand the bond between you and Harusaki-san more than anyone else.

Despite what Akishino-san might say, or however Fuyuumi-san disturbs you, you would definitely end up with her.”

She probably is talking about the “I must become a doctor to cure Chiwa” part.

But—

“Sorry for making you give such a passionate speech, but I’m afraid that is impossible. We are not in the type of relationship you are talking about.

“Why? Both of you clearly like each other.”

“I spoke about this with Chiwa before, I will only treat her as a family member, not a love interest.”

“Even if this is the case, it might change.”

I was starting to get annoyed.

“Why must you be so stubborn? Is there any advantage to hooking me up with Chiwa?”

“There is.”

I was surprised to see Masuzu tear up.

“Even for someone as cunning and despicable as me, I feel happy just by thinking that there are people as beautiful as you two. I can live on just by knowing this.”

“……”

“So, please, become happy with Harusaki-san.”

I turned my eyes away from Masuzu, and finished the iced water in one gulp.

This girl……

Such a kind request, it is hard to imagine that she is “Natsukawa Masuzu”.

The waitress came and refilled my cup, it seemed that she wanted to give me

another slip of paper again, but maybe she sensed the heavy atmosphere, she dragged herself back. What proverb was it supposed to be?

“We were dreaming all this time huh.”

Masuzu said while folding the wet napkin on the table.

“Both of us are anti-love, we fabricated the daydream of becoming lovers, a lot of things happened, both happy and sad, but a dream will always end.”

“By that, do you mean now?”

“When we break up……do it cleanly.”

Masuzu raised her head and smiled.

“I am planning to use my own way to help the both of you. This is the aim of the newborn “Society for Bringing Out Your Maiden Self”.

“I can’t make do with that.”

I frowned at the seemingly happy Masuzu.

“Is this really for the best? I don’t mind it if you had always treated me as a fake. I don’t mind if there is nothing real between us. But, from now on, will you—“

“But.”

Masuzu cut me off halfway.

“Your aim, is to help Harusaki-san right?”

“That’s right.”

Even if it is just me who wants this, I won’t compromise.

“If that’s the case, you should accept my proposal, because by doing this the both advantages and disadvantages are the same. Is this wrong?”

“…...it isn’t.”

I sighed.

It is the same as that time, Masuzu’s heart is still closed to the outside, not budging under my hand.

Do I have no other choice but to accept this—

“It was you who forced me to become your boyfriend, why is it like I am the one begging you not to leave now.”

Masuzu giggled.

“You are right about this. You are the one who doesn’t want to leave, I obviously dumped you.”

“Huh!? Was I dumped?”

“I said you should ‘be happy with other girls’. Isn’t it obvious who is the one dumped by the other?”

“……I can’t accept this……”

It seems that we can’t discuss what we want to anymore.

The most important thing is we don’t just stop being friends from now on.

Without using the twisted fake boyfriend relationship, we might be able to build up a more positive relationship.

“I understand.”

I shook my head, removing all my doubts, and told her.

“Let’s break up.”

“Okay.”

Gashaangaragaragaran! The café was filled with a loud noise.

The other customers turned to look, but I don’t need to see to know. It is probably the waitress dropping plates or whatever, I’m sorry, you even supported me.

Masuzu took the bill and stood up.

Her silver locks danced dazzlingly under the light.

The chances of looking at such beautiful hair at this distance will probably decrease from now on.

“Goodbye, ‘Eita’. Also, please take care of me from now on, ‘Eita-kun’.

♦

After leaving the café, en route back home.

Masuzu stopped where our routes split.

“Say, doesn’t this make me your ‘ex-girlfriend’?”

“Yeah.”

To be exact, an “ex-fake girlfriend”, but I didn’t have the need, time and energy to think of a title like this.

“This is quite the problem, I now hold the same title with Akishino-san.”

“That doesn’t even matter, does it…….”

An ex-girlfriend from the previous life, and an ex-girlfriend from this life, I can still balance this out, barely.

At this time, a small-framed silhouette approached us.

Even under the dim streetlight, the ribbons can be seen dancing, it’s Chiwa.

I was afraid for a second from habit, but I instantly changed my thoughts.

Because I am no longer lovers with Masuzu, even when we meet the childhood friend, there will be no mayhem.

“Good evening, Ei-kun, Natsukawa.”

For some reason, the Chiwa tonight felt so soft, even if she waved her hand and ran as energetic as usual.

“Did you guys just finish talking?”

“Yes, without a hitch.”

Masuzu smiled and approached Chiwa.

“Thanks to you, we are able to break up properly. Sorry to make such a huge commotion.”

“……really? Ei-kun.”

“At least it wasn’t a fight.”

Chiwa looked relieved.

“I won’t ask you the reason for breaking up, but please tell me this: Natsukawa, won’t you regret this?”

“Of course not.”

Masuzu answered immediately without hesitation.

“Because this is different from the sudden rush of emotions during the summer training camp, this is something I concluded from a lot of thinking.

Masuzu held Chiwa by her shoulders, and pushed her towards me.

“I—decided to support you two.”

“Su-support?”

Chiwa blinked.

“You can’t lose to Akishino-san and Fuyumi-san. Please hold on tightly to Eita-kun, don’t let him leave. Because your love is the hope of humanity!”

“Is it even at such a scale?”

Chihuahua-san was taken aback by the flattery. After all, she, who was the rival up till now, proposed to help, of course she will be surprised.

“Chiwa, why are you here?’

“I wanted to buy something at the supermarket, we are out of soy sauce.”

Masuzu patted my back.

“Eita-kun, accompany her.”

“Huh?”

“Accompany her! Do you want to let your cute girlfriend shop alone this late?”

This late? It’s just eight o’ clock.

Sigh, never mind, the sky is pretty dark, I can go with her.

“Is it alright? Ei-kun.”

“It is just around the corner anyways.”

Looking at us walking away, Masuzu started shouting banzai.

“Ahh, what a dazzling start! Totally like a bright light illuminating a dark street! It’s just like stars[5] on Earth! Gold! Diamond! How blinding! I’m getting dizzy! I’m getting purified—!” “Shut up, you’ll bother the neighbors!”

The nearby white collar workers and middle schoolers stopped walking, and looked at us, bewildered. Although I wanted to interview them one by one, “What do you think is the relationship between the three of us?” but I can’t do that right now, how embarrassing.

Chiwa ran up to me, who quickly left the scene.

“Hey, what is Natsukawa thinking[6]?”

“No idea!”

Just when I thought I got out of the fake boyfriend mess, I feel like new troubles are brewing.

In the end, am I still surrounded by mayhem?

Shuraba Collection[7]

~ShuraColle~

Standard Aircraft Carrier

Natsukawa

Carry weight 93

Radar 40

Anti-Aircraft 42

Armor 1

Primary Armament: Aerosmith[8]

I, Natsukawa, am the proud flagship of the Jien-otsu.

The countless aircrafts sent from this beautiful ship will bring an absolute

advantage.

It can destroy the dust-like destroyers[9] in seconds.

Vola, vola, vola, Volare via (Fly away)[10]

Translator notes and references

- The line is “ご武運を”, a line used when wishing a soldier luck in wars.
- The Japanese proverb was “急がば回れ”, essentially similar to haste makes waste.
- An old Japanese proverb, 人の恋路を邪魔する奴は馬に蹴られて死んじまえ, meaning one who interferes with the love life of another ought to be kicked to death by a horse.
- Happy as in blissful.
- The phrase Masuzu used here is 黄道十二宮(Koudou juuni miya), the twelve zodiac signs.
- Originally the sentence was “ねえ、夏川っていったい何考えて生きてるの？”, which I find hard to make it sound right, so I omitted the “living” part, it actually doesn’t matter at all does it.
- A reference to Kantai Collection, a popular navy game.
- Aerosmith is the stand of Narancia Ghirga from part 5 of JoJo.
- Weakest ship of the bunch.
- Aerosmith’s battlecry. “Vola, vola, vola” is said during his rapid fire attacks, while “Volare via” is used when he releases his missile.

#3: Mayhem aimed at Christmas

#3 聖夜をにらんで修羅場

修羅これくしょん
～修羅これ～

正規空母

夏川

搭載 93
索敵 40
対空 42
装甲 1
主力兵装 エアロスミス

栄光の自演乙艦隊の旗艦を担うのは私、夏川です。
この迫力ボディが繰り出す航空機数は圧倒的。
チリのような駆逐艦など瞬く間に撃沈です。
ボラボラボラ、ボラーレ・ヴィーア（飛んで行きな）。

With that, Masuzu returned to school as usual.

She was able to return “normally” without causing much commotion thanks to the huge school festival. Some problems did happen, like when Akano Mei brought the female classmates and asked her “What did you do during your leave? Were you sick? Or were you having a vacation?” or Tanaka from the football club yelling “Goalkeeper, jump to the side—!” when he saw Masuzu coming and was sent outside to stand in the corridor, but only to that extent.

Nobody knew about us breaking up.

The only people who knew were members of “Jien-otsu”, but they probably won’t just go around talking about that, so it doesn’t really trouble Masuzu; I am relieved about that.

A really hot lunch break.

I was eating lunch together with Kaoru at the garden behind the school shed.

I told him honestly about what happened with Masuzu, and wanted to discuss this through with him—

“I think it won’t be easily exposed since you will frequently have club activities together, but I don’t know if it will last for long.”

Kaoru held his strawberry milk in one hand and gave his slightly pessimistic view.

“After all, Natsukawa-san is well known. If nobody sees you going home together, or talking rather distantly, those petty things will cause rumors. If people like Akano-san start asking ‘Did you guys break up?’ then it would be bad.”

“Hmm…”

What Kaoru said is certainly correct, I can imagine it happening.

“Also, Natsukawa-san is planning to help Chihuahua-chan and Eita right? Won’t it be immediately exposed when people see this?”

He’s getting more and more on point, damn.

“It’s hard to be the class couple.”

Kaoru-sensei, who knows nothing about love, gave me some much needed advice.

“Meeting every day even after breaking up should be quite hard, I think. You will also be seen as ‘ex-lovers’ by others, that would be hard to deal with. Although I know quite a few girls who are in a relationship with their classmates, but they keep it low, which makes everything smoother.”

“I see.”

It seems that I had a peek of the school community controlled by the lovestruck minds.

I have always thought of lovers as beasts who think “Look at us going all lovey-dovey! Look!” before this.

But when they meet people whom they want to be in a serious relationship with, it would be better to not flaunt it and do it in secrecy……

“But, Kaoru doesn’t seem to be surprised, huh.”

“About what?”

“You don’t seem to be surprised about Masuzu and I breaking up.”

Kaoru answered while folding his empty carton.

“Natsukawa’s unstable emotions are obvious, even to outsiders, after entering the second semester.”

“So you thought we would break up?”

“From the start, why would you go out is already a mystery.”

How Kaoru-like, straight to the point.

“Tha-that’s also true, the most beautiful girl in the school and me, no matter

how you think about it, it doesn’t match huh?”

“No, no, that’s not what I meant by that.”

Kaoru thought in silence for quite some time.

“No matter how you think about it, it’s because Chihuahua-chan is too heavy……”

“Heavy?”

He can’t be talking about her weight, Chiwa is just as light as she looks.

“I think, any normal girl wouldn’t want to come in between Chihuahua-chan and Eita.”

“What are you talking about, how do you explain Hime and Fuyuumi?”

“Akishino-san already drew her line right? She doesn’t follow you around as much after the second semester.”

Ugh, I can’t say anything.

I'm not really near Hime aside from club activities, Kaoru is quite perceptive.

“The problem is A-chan, but mainly because she doesn’t know what is going on between Chihuahua-chan and you.”

“She introduces herself as my childhood friend too.”

There is nothing wrong with that, even now, I still treasure the memories with A-chan.

But using this memory to force me into marriage, this troubles me.

“This is because A-chan thinks her own memory is the most important, so she ignores Chihuahua-chan; maybe she will get into trouble one day.

“Don’t speak about such scary things.”

Kaoru shrugged.

“Don’t you see, Eita? You have a lot of landmines around you.”

“……hah.”

Initially I wanted to laugh it off, but I can’t do that.

Because Kaoru’s expression was serious.

“Careful to not step on the mines. Despite how I look, I am actually quite worried about you.”

♦

With Masuzu’s return, “Jien-otsu returned to its normal activities.

Chiwa was munching on her snacks nonstop.

Masuzu was busy reading JoJo.

Fuyuumi brought her laptop to do her student council work.

I was reading my textbooks in silence.

Hime started drawing recently, and she was sketching with the aid of an artbook today. She is really passionate about it, and her hand was black from the lead.

“Himecchi, what are you drawing?”

The instant Chiwa leaned over, Hime instantly covered the notebook with her body.

“This is a secret for now, when I get better I’ll let everyone see it.”

She seemed to be planning something. She was able to produce cat ears and tails of such quality after learning a bit, her drawing should be improving really fast too.

But—

She didn’t change one bit. To the point where it is scary.

Hime was silent. She was obviously at a loss when Masuzu confessed during the school festival, but she is staying silent right now.

Did she go over something with Mana? If that's the case, then won't Mana know about the fake boyfriend incident—no, Hime will never tell her that.

"Oh, do you guys have any plans for Christmas?"

Masuzu, who just finished a volume of JoJo, suddenly spoke up.

"What Christmas are you talking about, isn't there still another month to Christmas?"

"The station is already filled with lightings. Decorating the street for the lovers……it is really beautiful. How plastic."

Although this is definitely not passing the construction law, but the word she was looking for is probably romantic.[1]

Masuzu smiled like an angel.

"Such a beautiful Christmas, Eita-kun, who are you planning to spend it with?"

Chiwa, with a chip in her hand, froze.

Fuyuumi's hand, which was tapping at the keyboard before, froze.

Hime……ah, her pen is still going, she seems to not have realized, getting too soaked in her drawing.

I also didn't stop working on the problems.

"Because I have supplementary classes for winter, I don't have time to play __"

"Eh, the same supplementary classes from before?"

—the voice was Fuyuumi's.

"Yeah, there is an early bird discount."

“Then Ai-chan will also go♪we definitely will be in the same class again.”

“Probably.”

Because the system should be the same as the summer classes, it should be class Z again.

“So that means, this year’s Christmas, you will be spending it in supplementary classes with Fuyuumi-san?”

Masuzu cut us off with a sharp tone, totally different from before.

“Then what happens to Harusaki-san? Do you want to leave her alone? Chihuahua will die if left alone.”

“I-I won’t die.”

Chiwa was calm.

“Because Ei-kun wants to study, I can understand that.”

Masuzu still stared at me fiercely.

“Please spread your wings of imagination. On the cold Christmas night, the Chihuahua-san who was selling matches in a deserted street. ‘Do you need some matches wan?’ ‘Would you like to buy some matches wan?’ The Chihuahua-san who was shunned by the passersby. ‘Shut up, who needs matches!’ ‘Don’t you sell Zippo lighters? You don’t even have that, what a terrible shop.’ ‘I will buy the entire basket, in return……you understand, right? You are no longer a child anymore hehehe.’ Aaaah, the Chihuahua-san who was found frozen the next morning!”

“Why must I die?”

Looks like Masuzu still has the tendency of thinking pessimistically.

In the end, she is just thinking too highly of Christmas, just like those lovestruck brains.

“Isn’t it just a Western celebration? How silly. Why must one spend

Christmas with a lover? This is just an evil plot by the commercial agencies.”

“I agree.”

Hime spoke up, she seemed to be done with her drawing.

I stole a glance at the notebook……hmm? There are boxes? Is it a comic?

“Speaking of Christmas, one would think it is a Christian celebration, but that is just a plot to scam the stupid people.

“That’s right, everyone seems to be controlled by the media.”

“From the information I got from the president of the internet, the ‘American army’s plot’ conspiracy seems to be the most possible. Christmas night is the only night when the magic power of the red moon hits 666, it is the best time to initiate their plot to revive Lucifer. The out of season typhoon that hit Hanenoyama City a few days ago is also reported to be the American army testing out their meteorological weapons[2], we must not let down our guard.”

“……o-oh.”

So “that” is her conspiracy—

……how embarrassing……

Chuunibyou can be cured just by looking at other people’s chuunibyou. Sorry, commercial agencies and the American army.

Masuzu seemed to not be done with her speech and leaned forward.

“Listen up Eita-kun, please spread your wings of imagination.”

“I don’t want to spread anymore……”

You probably just wanted to say “wings of imagination”.

“Christmas night, the Chihuahua-san who was eating alone. Biting on the supermarket’s half price chicken that seems to be horrible. ‘Is mom and dad working overtime again tonight?’ ‘Can’t help it, they are working for my

sake.’ Nobody answered her mumbles, the only sound being the microwave’s “beep” after heating up the soup. ‘Ei-kun, is with Fuyuumi now……’ To fend off her heavy heart, Harusaki-san reached out to the leftover matches. She reminisced her memories with him through the dancing flames. ‘Ei-kun, ahhhh, Ei-kun!’. The Chihuahua-san who lighted one match after another, and drowned herself in her memories. Alas, the Chihuahua-san whose body was once again found the next day, cold!”

“Wasn’t she at home!?”

Looks like she wants Chiwa dead no matter what.

Masuzu said she wanted to support our relationship, and it does look that way, but she feels the same as the old Masuzu.

“Back to the point, I really don’t mind. I am having dinner with my parents during Christmas, right, Ei-kun?”

“It’s the same every year for your family.”

Due to Chiwa’s parents being busy at work and not at home most of them time, they treat festivities like New Years, Christmas and birthdays highly.

Fuyuumi happily leaned over.

“If that’s the case, let’s work hard together during Christmas!”

“Yeah, you’ll help me a lot by not being so close right now.”

I was worried if she would actually let me study in peace.

On the other hand, Masuzu started mumbling to herself.

“Sigh, Harusaki-san really isn’t wary enough. If you don’t firmly hold this man down he will start flirting left and right, he’s indecent when it comes to girls, there is no helping him.”

She has really bad notions of me.

“Ah—that, Masuzu? You really don’t need to worry that much—“

“What are you talking about! This lecturing geek, if we leave you alone you will definitely run off to study or lecture other women! If you don’t start going out in front of me, I will be worried!”

“Ehhhh……”

So troublesome.

Just like what Kaoru said, landmines are aplenty.

Although there were plenty of bombs before this, but they are visible.

But right now, the situation is quite messed up, I don’t even know where to step.

♦

With that, I carefully moved through the landmines to the second half of the second semester.

It is the second week of November, which means there is less than a month to the finals.

If I can’t take back first place this time, I have to spend the rest of the year as second place. This is not a joke, I must welcome the new year with first place.

My strongest rival yawned on the seat beside me.

“Fuaaah, why can’t my table be made of feathers?”

The one speaking is Mogami Yura-san (currently first place in our year).

She was lying on the table, lightly tapping on it with her soft right cheek.

Fifth period, which was located right after lunch was changed into a self-study session to let the other classes catch up with our pace.

Because there is a teacher in class, nobody left their seats, but there qwew people chatting softly or dozing off. Since the teacher was busy computing the marks for the quiz, she just ignored them.

“Kidou-kun is really diligent in class huh.”

“Hmph, what is wrong with studying in a self-study session.”

“Nobody said it was wrong.

She yawned while saying “it feels really uncomfortable”, seems like she was up quite late studying.

“Hey, how long do you practice each day?[3]”

“Normally I start once I reach home, because there is a special room for that, so I just shut myself in it and study. I do eat dinner and bathe in between, and study until 12 o’ clock. In total…about six hours?”

“Hmm, how deserving.”

What a person, even I only study about 5 hours a day.

I still have to waste time on housework, what should I do to defeat her on the time spent studying?

“But the broadcasting amount is not rising……although I sent it in almost ten times already.”

“Huh?”

“Looks like I definitely need to practice more. I need to start saving up money, and have more vocal practice.”

“……what are you talking about?”

“Of course it is karaoke, isn’t that obvious?”

“I’m talking about studying!”

I can’t help but shout.

I lowered my head as the teacher stared at me.

Mogami replied in a hushed tone.

“Didn’t Chiwa tell you about it? I thought you must be talking about this.”

“How should I know, and how did our conversation topic turn into karaoke?”

“But I thought where our conversation was headed didn’t involve you asking me about my time spent studying. The fact that you are interested in someone else’s study habits is already out of my imagination.

“…aah, really?”

Anyhow.

Mogami Yura has no interest in studying, and doesn’t treat me as a rival.

Then why is she still taking first place, how annoying.

“Then, let me ask you again. How much time do you spend studying a day?”

“Usually, zero.”

“Ze—”

“Isn’t paying attention in class enough? Although I would study a bit for exams.”

“—ro”

So this type of people actually does exist.

Indeed, looking at the experience sharing of first rate university graduates, there are people who say things like “as long as you attend class and practice the past year papers it would be enough!”.

“Then, why are you studying in Hane-kou?”

“Because it is close to my house, I can see the field’s white lines from my bathroom window.

Mogami yawned three times while saying that line.

This person—is really a monster.

I have to overcome a genius like this and regain first place…..can I really do this?

♦

The bell signaling the end of school hours rang, and while I was stuffing my notebooks and textbooks into my bag—

“Hmm?”

A pencil that I should’ve kept in my stationery case is gone.

I looked around, but it wasn’t on the floor.

“Alright, whatever.”

Because I usually use my mechanical pencil, the pencil is just a spare, and I rarely use it, so it doesn’t really trouble me.

“Okay, Eita-kun, time for club activities.”

Masuzu approached me, bag in hand.

“I have something to do in the office, please go on ahead, don’t forget to fetch Harusaki-san.”

“Why do I have to fetch her?”

I tilt my head in wonder, and Masuzu snapped.

“For two people who like each other and are in the same club, isn’t going to club activities together normal?

“Definitely not, Chiwa and I are not even goin—“

“Let’s not talk about this.”

Masuzu stopped me from finishing and rolled her eyes.

“You were talking with Mogami Yura again, right?”

“It was just a casual chat, she is sitting beside me after all.”

“This won’t do, you need to avoid doing things that will invoke misunderstandings with Harusaki-san! Do you understand?”

“Yes yes.”

“Once is enough!”

“……yyyessss.[4]”

When will this support for our relationship end?

Making it this obvious, the fact that you are single will be easily seen, right?

♦

I received a message when Chiwa, Hime and I were waiting in the clubroom.

It is from the currently missing Fuyuumi. I already heard that she wasn’t coming today due to student council work beforehand.

[Subject] ♥LOVE♥INVITATION♥

[Content] I am waiting for you on the roof, can you come alone?

……

What is she planning this time?

Alright, even though I have the rough idea.

“Pachi Lemon” December Issue•Merry Christmas Special

A must do even during Christmas night♥Popucute test!

Answered by “Summer River”-san (pen name)

Q1: What is the true form of Santa Claus?

A1: Do we need to know this? Even though we are killing him?

Q2: White Christmas! How would you have some fun in the snow with him?

A2: Checkmate him.[5]

Q3: What do you want to give him as a present?

A3: An iPad with a broken LCD screen.

Q4: What do you wish to get from him?

A4: An iPad without a broken LCD screen.

Q5: What is Christmas to you truthfully?

A5: I can’t watch the JoJo colour version I bought……

Your Christmas is: Too sad!

Pachi Lemon Editorial Board: Did your iPad break?

Translator notes and references

- Plastic and romantic both ends with –tic, and that’s the same case in Japanese. “プラスチック” and “ロマンチック”.
- Basically a manipulation of weather during war.
- Here, practice doesn’t have a definite action, since Kidou meant it as studying, but didn’t specify the action, for the following neta it is required to be kept this way. The original sentence was “ねあ、お前って一日何時間くらいやってるんだ？”.
- Imagine it being dragged out.
- The original phrase is “雪隠詰め”, which includes the word “snow” but has nothing to do with snow. It means to corner someone.

#4: Forceful Wife Leads to Mayhem

#4 押しかけ女房の修羅場

『パチレモン』12月号・メリークリスマス特別付録

聖夜もやるゾ♥モテカワ度テスト!

ペンネーム「サマーリバー」さんの回答

Q1：サンタの正体ってなんだろうね?

A1：知る必要があるの? どうせ殺すのに?

Q2：ホワイトクリスマス! 彼とどんな雪遊びを?

A2：雪隠詰め

Q3：彼にあげたいプレゼントは?

A3：液晶が割れてるipad

Q4：彼からもらいたいプレゼントは?

A4：液晶が割れてないipad

Q5：ずばり、あなたにとってクリスマスとは?

A5：せっかく買ったジョジョのカラー版が読めない……

あなたのクリスマスは：悲惨すぎ!

パチレモン編集部より：ｉｐａｄ割ったの?

This is the second time I am called to the roof by a girl, the first one being Hime.

No, if we count Chiwa's "confession practice" during club activities, this is the third time. By looking only at the numbers, it's going from being popular, to being even more popular; however, there hasn't even been one serious confession. This time, it will probably be the same.

"Thanks for coming! Takkun."

Under the bright autumn sky, Fuyuumi Ai energetically turned to face me.

"Why are you asking me out on such a cold day?"

The wind on the roof at four o' clock is surprisingly cold. From the start, my hands were freezing, and I was rubbing my hands like an old man.

"But I don't feel cold at all."

Fuyuumi's face looked slightly reddish as she muttered.

"Then, Ai-chan will share her warmth with you～♪"

She grabbed my arm and rubbed it.

"Do-don't stick to me—! Get away!"

Although I instantly shrugged her away, but she felt really warm and comfortable. Close quarter combat is really dangerous, I will lose to A-chan's softness.

"You know my reason for calling you out, right?"

"……you can say that."

Most probably, it is about me and Masuzu breaking up.

"I won't ask you why, although I have a lot to tell Natsukawa-san, but what's past is past. But, I can treat that the contract is broken, right?"

"Contract?"

At this moment, Fuyuumi took a step forward.

Her face was so close our fringes almost touched, and she looked so serious, my heart skipped a beat.

“Please go out with me, Kidou Eita-kun.”

“…..”

So, this is the reason?

“A-chan, I said it before. I didn’t stamp on the marriage registration certificate.”

“I know, you didn’t stamp it, you used your fingerprint♪”

“I said that’s not the case!”

This is too annoying, a marriage registration with a blood fingerprint, what’s this, a contract with Satan?

“As I said before, about the marriage, I won’t reveal it to the public before our graduation.”

“If it’s possible, I wish to never make it public.”

“But, a normal lover relationship is not a problem right? Because Takkun is already single.”

“……ugh.”

Damn, I have nothing to say against that.

Although it looked like one-sided blackmail from Masuzu to make me her fake boyfriend, I also received protection from it. At least I used to have a reason like “I have a girlfriend” to reject others’ confessions.

But now, that shield has disappeared, and I can only fight them off with my bare fists.

“I don’t want to go out with anyone.”

“About that, although it isn’t nice to listen to comments like ‘right after a breakup he is already going out with another!?’, I think if we explain it properly, they will understand.

“That’s not what I meant.”

“The upperclassmen in the disciplinary committee are all rooting for us, there won’t be any negative rumours, and I will get Kaoru to help us too. This is better, I wanted everyone to attend the wedding in the first place♪”

Fuyuumi said while twisting around.

“If I can go out with Takkun, I think every day will be really happy. I will make lunch for you every day, and I already found a few places where we can have lunch together alone. Let’s study together after school? Actually, I have a café which I would like to go with Takkun, and……”

She was really happy while envisioning a rose-coloured future. So dazzlingly bright that you can almost see the rose in her eyes.

But I must remove that rose.

Although it hurts me to do so, this is what I must do!

“I am actually ‘anti-love’.”

I said it……

I finally said it.

I have never actually told anybody about it, not even Chiwa or Kaoru, this is only between me and Masuzu, I finally said it.

Fuyuumi tilted her head in confusion.

“Clueless about love?[1]

“It’s anti!”

But I won’t deny the fact that I am also clueless about love.

“My parents divorced when I was in third grade, because they both had extra marital affairs, so they left me and disappeared. This is why Saeko-san took over their role as a guardian.”

Fuyuumi listened to me attentively.

She didn’t look surprise, most probably because she already guessed it.

“What does this have to do with Takkun’s ‘anti’?”

“Before second grade, my parents were lovey dovey, even sweeter than what you said before. But in just one year, it turned into such mayhem. In the end they created a lot of trouble for the relatives, they left their work and family, and eloped with their new partners. I look down on these type of ‘love comes first mentality’ from the bottom of my heart. If they experience it themselves, anyone would have the thought of ‘why does love even matter?’”

“So, you became ‘anti-love’?”

“Yeah.”

“If so, why did you go out with Natsukawa-san?”

“……I can only say a lot of things went wrong, so our relationship didn’t last.”

“Hmm,” Fuyuumi muttered, but she didn’t probe any deeper.

“I don’t want to go out with anyone. I’m sorry, but I can’t accept your confession.”

I exhaled loudly.

I finished my speech with that.

It feels great to let out all the words piled in my heart.

“I see……”

Fuyuumi sounded troubled.

“So something like that happened, must’ve been quite hard on Takkun.”

“Don’t talk about it anymore, it isn’t to the point where you need to sympathize with me.”

Having divorced parents are common, so I don’t think I am unlucky. In fact, I got Saeko-san to look after me, so this might even be my luck.

“You are right, I’m sorry I drew a conclusion.”

“I should be the one saying sorry for making you listen to such a boring story.”

Mmm.

With this I settled a problem.

Fuyuumi also seemed to understand, she was smiling, relieved.

“Therefore, I will stay by your side from now on. Let us try our best to take care of each other.”

“Yeah, don’t leave again.”

“The first place we should go—how about Gorgeous Tsuba Park? I heard that couples who go there on their first date will have a long lasting relationship.

“Oh, is there such a superstition?”

“Although it is slightly 'that' if we think about those too much, but I think having the same beliefs is important for both of us. By slowly gathering small superstitions, it will become a bond one day—that’s what I believe.”

I can’t help but chuckle.

“A-chan is really romantic huh.”

“Hmph—! Why is Takkun laughing! Idiot!”

She knocked my shoulder with her fist.

“Ahaha, that hurt, idiot.”

I punched back in return.

“Those who call others idiot are idiots themselves, idiot!”

Poka poka.[2]

“A-chan was the one who said it first.”

Poka poka, poka.

Fufufu, it seems to be warming up?

“Ahhhhh~where are you hitting? Pervert Takkun!”

“What, that isn’t considered as your shoulder? How is this perverted, if we put it this way A-chan is way more perverted. Take this—“

“Aahhh ♪ A-chan feels like she’s getting warmer—“

“Hihihi, then A-chan, let me make you warmer—wait,

WHYYY----------MM!?”

I accidentally made the “mm” sound by exerting too much strength.

“Why did it turn out this way!? I said I am not going out with you, didn’t I!”

“Takkun, calm down, you've been totally messed up since quite a while ago.”

“You are the only person whom I don’t want to hear that from the most!”

I think I am close to tears.

Although the words are comprehensible, the reasoning is not, how horrifying……

“I understand that Takkun is anti-love, but after I've heard all that I can’t leave you alone. I wasn’t going to leave you anyway, okay, right?”

“……huh?”

“Anyway, that’s all!”

Fuyuumi pointed her right index finger at me sternly.

The disciplinary committee mode pose that I haven’t seen in a long time.

“I will use my “love” to cure your anti-love, and let everyone witness it!”

When I returned to my senses, I was already stunned by A-chan’s face.

“…..ahhh……”

Yeah.

This is how A-chan is like.

Someone who takes her feelings very seriously, a nosy person.

“I think if you come in contact with true love, Takkun’s ‘hating something before trying[3]’ mentality can be cured. It’s like watering flowers, if you put your feelings into it, a wilting relationship will also bloom!”

A-chan looked more motivated than ever before.

Why……

I already rejected her, why is this making things worse?

I don’t understand.

I don’t understand anything.

Love is too hard!

♦

The next morning.

I woke up to the smell of miso soup.

What a nice smell.

The miso soup I make is made using Kombu[4] stock, but this soup is made using anchovy stock. It smells great, I would have it together with grilled salmon and fermented soy beans.

Although I want to get out of bed and straight to the living room…….today is just too cold, I don't want to leave my bed.

"Takkun, it's morning. Wake up."

A melodious voice rang through my ears and heart.

"Just let me sleep for five more minutes."

"No—pe, you can't enjoy your breakfast slowly this way, can you?"

Someone is shaking my body.

"…….what dishes are there?"

"Miso soup with tofu, omelette, and boiled spinach[5]. and grilled salmon ～♪"

"If you add natto to it, I will wake up."

"I guess it can't be helped. I understand, let Ai-chan stir it up for you."

"Stir it up huh—"

How exciting.

After stirring it for fifty times, the world will change, acquiring a really strong flavour. Adding A-chan's love into it would have the combined strength of a hundred people.

Wait—

"Why are you here!?"

First thing in the morning is nori tsukkomi in my room.[6]

“Don’t surprise me by suddenly shouting.”

Fuyuumi Ai was wearing her uniform with an apron on top, and stared at me with widened eyes. I am the one who should be staring!

“How did you get in? Where’s the key? I should’ve locked the doors right!?”

Has the lovestruck brain deteriorated into a criminal!?

“I rang the doorbell like a normal person, aunt[7] opened for me.”

Ah.

“Saeko-san is back?”

I thought she would be staying overnight at her office as usual, to be awake at this time, she must’ve stayed up through the night.

“Now now, since you understand, hurry up and wake up, or else you’ll be late.”

Whoosh! The curtains were pulled open, and the sky was so bright I loathed it.

Is this a step in curing my anti-love?

♦

When I got to the living room, I saw Saeko-san smiling, seated by the dining table.

“Morning—Eita, how do you feel, having a girl waking you up?”

“My comfort rating has dropped by a lot!”

Although I wanted to try and shout for a bit, on the table was a delicious looking full course breakfast. My stomach growled, and that calmed me down.

“Ahhh～this grilled salmon is perfectly～cooked! Convenience stores can’t make something of this level.”

“Thanks for the compliment, aunt.”

Fuyuumi stood in the kitchen, smiling.

“Come on Takkun, take a seat. I will heat up the miso soup.”

“O,oh……”

I feel like everything is messed up.

The kitchen that is usually mine has changed hands, Fuyuumi was standing there, making it feel like this is someone else’s house.

Fuyuumi was singing “cooking is love～♪” while dancing back and forth between the stove and the chopping board. Grinding the carrot to mush, stirring the miso soup, and cleaning up. She did it beautifully, it seems that she is experienced.

“Takkn, how much rice would you like?”

“No—normal would do.”

“Okay, right up♪”, said Fuyuumi while spinning the shamoji[8], even the “Gashakon” of opening and closing the rice cooker was rhythmical.

“How great.”

Saeko-san stirred her natto while complimenting her.

“A tsundere being bad at cooking is a basic setting, but you’re surprisingly good at this.”

“Ufufu aunt, I’m not a tsundere. If you really want to assign me a trope—yup, it should be deredere; because I am full of love for Takkun!”

“Oohhh, you have a point there!”

Hahahahahaha! Saeko-san and Fuyuumi’s laughs echoed around the living

room.

What is this space[9]……

I feel like vomiting sugar, my stomach is upset before even touching the food.

“Saeko-san, what is going on?”

“Nothing much, I heard you broke up with Natsukawa-san?”

She stared at me with sharp eyes.

“Honestly, why didn’t you talk to me about this—your sister is sad. I thought you would talk about it with me first.”

“No matter how you think about it, there’s no such option…….”

Why would someone talk about their love life with their guardian, how embarrassing.

“I told you before, I am against you going out with that girl. Although I am fine with you going out with Chihuahua-chan, but tsundere girl isn’t bad either. Look at how well that “uniform apron” goes together, I can’t hold myself back! Cosplay can’t even reach this level!

“Haa—”

Speaking of that, I remember Masuzu did come uninvited in her uniform and apron.

The apron was brand new, without dirt or creases, a new product that doesn’t feel homely.

But that was quite good too—although it’s different when Fuyuumi wears it. After repeated washing, the colour and pattern has faded. The apron is full of life from Fuyuumi’s family, coupled with the dark blue uniform, it creates a strong, attractive contrast.

“I am the one who does the housework in my family.”

Fuyuumi said while giving me a cup of tea.

She did talk about her mother’s passing before, and her knife work during summer camp was beautiful too; her experience with housework should be longer than mine.

“Is it fine, leaving your own housework like this?”

“Of course I made my father and brother’s breakfast before leaving.”

What time did you wake up.

I took a mouthful of rice, and—

“De—delicious!”

Both moistness and timing is perfect. It should be cooked with the same rice cooker, why is her rice so much better?

“For you, Takkun! I stirred it for you.”

She passed me the natto covered in cream-like strings.

I added the natto on the steaming rice, and stuffed them into my mouth. The special pungent smell was purified by the white rice, the strings filled my mouth, filling it with an indescribable taste. Rice, bean, rice bean, every time I bit on the bits, there was a different feel, a “how lucky am I to be born in Japan” happiness filled my heart.

“Eita’s stomach is so easily captured.”

Before Saeko-san’s voice brought me back to reality, I was busy stuffing natto rice into my mouth.

Fuyuumi grinned.

“Can I come over to make breakfast from time to time?”

“Of course I would welcome you—but, if Chihuahua knew of this, do you think she would stay silent?”

Saeko-san glanced at me, she really enjoys teasing me.

“I am not going out with Chiwa anyway.”

“Then there’s no problem!”

Fuyuumi happily returned to the sink, and started washing the dishes.

I am really grateful for her.

Although I am grateful, I still can’t understand anything.

I think eating a great breakfast and liking love[10] are two different things.

♦

The first line was Chiwa’s complaint.

“The mayhem between my childhood friend and my friend.”

While Fuyuumi was clinging to me as we were getting ready to walk out of the house, we met Chiwa who was also leaving her house. What a scary situation.”

“Hey, Ai, why are you coming out from Ei-kun’s house?”

“Isn’t that obvious? I made breakfast for him.”

Fuyuumi was clinging to my arm.

“It doesn’t matter, right? Takkun is single anyway, so I don’t need to care about Natsukawa-san. Of course, I don’t need your permission either!”

That line was full of challenge.

On the other hand, although Chiwa looked lost for a moment, she remained calm throughout.

“Ei-kun, it’s great that you can enjoy your breakfast. It’s been a long time since you ate a nice breakfast, right?”

“Now that you said it, that’s definitely the case.”

Because recently my time spent studying late has increased, my breakfast is usually simple, some bread from the convenience store and milk, or just white rice coupled with miso soup.

“Although I can make breakfast for you, it is definitely not comparable to Ai.”

“Fufufu, Chiwa has improved a lot, but you still have a long way before reaching my level.”

Speaking of that, I remember Chiwa was learning culinary from Fuyuumi.

Although that’s the case…….

Surprisingly, Chiwa wasn’t mad.

If it was Masuzu, she would instantly create a mayhem.

‘Why are you coming out from Ei-kun’s house, you childhood friend thief!’

‘O—hohoho! That’s of course because I am his girlfriend, regrettable Chihuahua-san!’

It’s not that I want to boast, but I can totally imagine this scene, even imagining myself being useless between them.

Because the enemy is not Masuzu, she doesn’t have the will to fight?

Fuyuumi seemed to be thinking about that same thing.

“Chiwa, don’t you have anything to say?”

“Eh?”

“Even if I go to school with Takkun, you won’t bark at me, or bite me?”

“Compared to that, I have more opinions towards being treated like a dog.”

Although Chiwa stared at Fuyuumi with watery eyes, her expression instantly returned to usual.

“Instead—is Ai fine with that?”

Fuyuumi frowned.

“What do you mean?”

“Despite your relationship being long distance, are you fine with having an affair so openly? Are things stale between you two? He didn’t come back during summer vacation too.”

“So, what are you talking about?”

“You’re still asking me that……”

Chiwa looked at me.

Seeing that troubled expression, I understood what Chiwa wanted to say.

We said the same line almost simultaneously.

“Where is Murata Michel Daigorou?”

Fuyuumi face froze, still frowning.

Katakata! She started trembling.

Gashi! She covered her face and screamed at the cold morning sky.

“Ai-chan, setting epically forgotten----------!!” [11]

So she really forgot about it……

This girl forgets her own setting way too easily. Although she’s stubborn, she's usually honest and can’t really become a “liar”. Completely opposite

from Masuzu.

“Err, ermmm, that’s, so, Michell, should I say he has almost disappeared[12] —he didn’t call or message me recently, this won’t do. It must be Tokyo that changed him! The people of Kabukichou[13], the exhaust gas from Tokyo Highway, the electromagnetic waves of the Skytree[14], all of it corrupted his heart!”

So she is saying that her breaking up is all Tokyo’s fault. Apologize to all the Tokyo citizens.

“So you broke up?”

“I, I dumped him!”

She wants to come out on top no matter what, how A-chan-like.

“Because you broke up with Michel, so you want Ei-kun to become your boyfriend. Although it’s not wrong to say it’s like Ai to do so,”

“Tha-that’s not the case! I am not like those promiscuous women!”

Yeah, the thing light about A-chan is not her behind, but her brain.[15]

“Then what is this? Two timing?”

“Like I said, no, no, everything is not like what you think it is—!”

Fuyuumi shook her head, with her eyes in tears, and moved backwards.

After piling lies after lies, the snowball is reaching a breaking point.

She looked so pitiful, and just as I was going to help her—

“Oh, right, I forgot I have disciplinary committee work! I am running to school—!”

Before I can stop her, she was already sprinting away in the direction of the school.

“Ai can run really fast—it would be great if she joinededed the track and

field.

“Although that is not the point you should be complimenting.”

I sighed and walked forwards.

Chiwa followed me closely.

“I heard it will rain this evening, Ei-kun, have you brought your umbrella?”

“I left mine in the classroom beforehand.”

“It might get stolen.”

“I prepared for that too, my name is written on top in huge letters.”

“Ahaha, how Ei-kun like.

A really boring conversation.

When I am with Masuzu, Hime or Fuyuumi, such conversations rarely happen.

“You weren’t angry just now.”

“Eh, angry about what?”

I asked her carefully why she wasn’t angry when I left my house with Fuyuumi.

“Oh, that”, Chiwa laughed.

“Because Ai is not Natsukawa.”

“…….and?”

“I don’t need to get so serious, although I can’t really explain it.”

What does that mean?

Although she sees Masuzu as an enemy, that isn’t the case for Fuyuumi?

“Also, if I fight with Ai in front of your house, you would be troubled, no?”

“That’s not wrong.”

It would leave a bad impression on the neighbors if mayhem occurred so early in the morning in front of our houses.

“I don’t want to trouble Ei-kun. That’s all.”

“Tha-thanks.”

Chiwa was thinking out of her way for me.

What is this feeling.

My nose is twitching, my heart feels warm……

“By the way, Ei-kun, did you lost weight recently?”

“Really?”

I think Masuzu said something like that before too.

Chiwa looked worried.

"Although I wouldn’t like to trust Ai on this, but if Ei-kun can eat properly this way, then it’s fine. Is this what they call 'lose a dime and win a dollar'?"

Although I think the meaning is somewhat off, I can feel Chiwa’s kindness from that.

Damn.

Why am I getting embarrassed? I can’t look at Chiwa anymore.

♦

When I opened the locker, I found something different from usual.

“……hmm?”

My indoor shoes have become brand new ones.

In my locker there wasn't my old dirty shoes, but a pair of new ones.

Did someone make a mistake and take my shoes?

No, that’s probably not the case. If that happened there is no reason to put a new pair in.

“What’s wrong, Ei-kun? We’re running late.”

“No-nothing.”

Pressured by Chiwa, I wore the new indoor shoes, the size was perfect.

Although I didn’t suffer any real losses, I don’t really feel good about this……

Shuraba Collection

～ShuraColle～

Submarine

Hime 666

Firepower 7

Torpedo 56

Luck 40

Armor 11

Primary Armament: 61cm (C2) Torpedo

Hello from the bottom of hell～(No fluctuations in tone).

I hope everyone calls me Hime, this is the name of my soul(Look

honest).

Look at this swimsuit Eita specifically asked for, full of beautility[16]?

(Pleading)

The Torpedo of the sacred dragon shall carve victory into the horizon of

dawn……(Reverberating)

Translator notes and references

- Anti-love is “Renai Anchi”, Fuyuumi mistook it as “Renai Onchi”.
- I just took the original sound effect without changing it, no idea if it’s supposed to be the thumping of the heart or the punches.
- Originally 食わず嫌い, literally hating a food before even trying it.
- Seaweed, Saccharina japonica.
- Hourensou no ohitashi is the name of the dish.
- The original sentence was 朝からノリツッコミｉｎ俺の部屋. Nori Tsukkomi is a form of tsukkomi where you go along with something that is off before throwing the punchline after some time. Basically a delayed tsukkomi, which happens frequently between Eita and Ai. Also notice that “in” is in English.
- Oba-sama, respectful tone.
- A type of rice scoop.
- Space as in 空間, can mean some sort of dimension, or just plain space.
- Liking love, not liking Fuyuumi. Not to be confused.
- Similar to her usual “愛衣ちゃん大勝利” (Ai-chan, Epic Victory!), this is 愛衣ちゃん設定大忘却
- Original word was 消滅, different from 消失, so instead of being “disappear”, it has a meaning of “destroyed” or “annihilated”, but can also mean “disappear”, but it is just not the most suitable word. Panic reaction possibly.
- Red light district in Shinjuku, Tokyo.
- Tokyo Skytree, world’s highest free-standing broadcasting tower.
- Promiscuous or slutty is written as 尻軽, literally meaning “light butt”.
- Not to be confused with beauty. Hime is a submarine right now, utility is important.

#5: One-Eyed Ai's Mayhem

#5 独眼竜愛衣の修羅場

修羅場これくしょん
～修羅これ～

潜水艦

姫666

- 火力 7
- 雷装 56
- 運 40
- 装甲 11
- 主力兵装 61cm(C2)魚雷

地獄の底からこんにちは～(棒)。
ヒメって呼んで欲しい。それが魂の名(迫真)。
機能美にあふれるエイタ指定の水着を見て見て？(懇願)
聖竜の魚雷は暁の水平線に勝利を刻んで……(余韻)。

Anyone will have experiences of getting frustrated[1]

The first time I got frustrated was back in the second semester of my second grade. Starting from kindergarten, I have always been chosen as the relay runner during sports festival, but that time I got frustrated.

If it was the current me, I would say “Relay? That’s too troublesome, pass” or something along the lines, but during that time, I was heavily impacted.

I don’t know who set the rules, but for the lower graders, “fast runners are cool” is a value upheld by the majority. Relay runners are cool, in other words, the resulted theory was “I am cool”.

How regrettable, ahhh how regrettable.

I must get back the “cool” title next year, I still remember I trained by running back and forth on the nearby river bank. Although one month later, I got into the anime reruns in evening and gave up on training.

In the end, I failed to become a runner in third grade too.

But at that time I stopped feeling bad about it. After all, “being cool because I can run very fast” itself is a theory that makes no sense. Speed is only useful when you’re running late, so if I can let go of my pride in my speed, nothing really matters anymore. Young Eita leveled up, he already surpassed himself, he is growing up.

Seven years later—

The second semester in the first year of high school, I was frustrated again.

“Why can’t I win?”

Looking at the returned maths exam paper, I scratched my head in frustration.

Ninety marks. Under normal circumstances, it wouldn’t be weird to see this as first place, because Kaoru got eighty one for it, I should be much higher than the class average.

But, I wasn’t first place.

The answer sheet of the woman with a three-strand braid yawning on the seat next to me says everything.

“What are you doing, you were staring at me since quite some time ago, do you like me?”

“I wasn’t even staring at your face!”

On her answer sheet, a huge hanamaru[2] and the number “100” decorated her paper.

“How did you answer the last question?”

“Didn’t we learn this recently?”

“I’m talking about the time constraint.”

The mathematics teacher Yu Gamidani-sensei is nicknamed “Infinite Hell” for his papers. Because there are too many questions, it is almost impossible to finish the paper. He himself said “you have to answer the questions you know first, this is very important”, and he wants to train our ability in choosing the questions with a large amount of questions.

So I though eighty percent was good enough.

Since the test results for the quiz won’t get announced, I don’t really care about other students’ results.

But I never thought someone could score full marks on it!

“Because I learnt the soroban[3], probably thanks to that.”

She answered uninterestedly.

I learnt the soroban too, but I gave up after three days.

“Why do you care so much about such a small quiz?”

“It’s important for me.”

“Mmm, your ego is quite huge.”

“It’s not because of that—”

I can’t throw away my “meaningless pride” like what I did during the relay.

If I can’t maintain my first place position, the door to getting recommendation to medical universities will be closed to me.

This is not about my pride, but ‘’’our’’’ aim.

♦

Therefore, I need to study hard.

I was focusing on mathematics in the clubroom after school. Picking out the same amount of questions as the quiz from my collection of questions, calculating the required amount of time.

“Eh, Eita-kun?”

“I’m busy, talk to me later.”

Facing Masuzu’s sharp voice, I didn’t raise my head, and continued my work.

“Since you came to the clubroom, why don’t you chat a bit with Harusaki-san”

“Eh? Me?”

Chiwa sounded surprised, and raised her head from the shoujo manga she was reading.

“It’s fine, never mind, he can say whatever he wants anytime.”

“You’re so relaxed about this, this man will marry a revision book if he can.”

“Will the wedding be held in the bookstore?”

Hime spoke up softly. Please, I won’t marry a book.

…….hmm?

“Hey, Hime, was that a joke?”

“…….”

Hime blushed and lowered her head.

Uohhhhh! Hime is embarrassed at her own joke!

My heart is beatingggggggggg! Himeka is really cute!

“You’re still your same old self, getting turned on by Akishino-san.”

Masuzu’s cold voice pulled me back to reality.

“I-I wasn’t turned on at all! I was just looking over her as a guardian!”

I won’t look at Hime this way! Only sometimes!

Wait……

Now is not the time to get distracted.

If this was a real exam I am already done for, I need to concentrate.

When I got back to my questions, the door opened.

I knew it was Fuyuumi, so I didn’t look up. Chiwa only glanced a little.

But Chiwa started yelling.

“Wha-what’s with your getup!?”

I looked at Fuyuumi—and said the same thing.

“What’s with your getup!?”

She was wearing a shroud.

Fuyuumi Ai looked serious, she was clad in white, with an triangular bandage[4] on her head, kneeling with white socks on, while carrying a huge cross(paper) she somehow got her hands on.

This getup was the same as what she wore when she apologized to the disciplinary committee upperclassmen when Hime’s chuunibyou worsen. This time she carried an extra cross to increase the strength.

“I have to apologize to everyone.”

Fuyuumi raised her head and looked at everyone.

“I said I had a boyfriend right? Murata Michel Daigorou, do you still remember?”

Everyone nodded, including me, you are the only one who forgot about him.

“That is actually—a lie. Michel was fabricated, he’s fictional, fake! Because you said I was ‘jealous since I have no boyfriend’, I lied without giving much thoughtttttt! Ai-chan epic boast!”

“I’m sorry!” Fuyuumi knelt on the ground and apologized.

The clubroom was silent.

Since I already knew, I wasn’t surprise.

The important part is their reaction.

The first to speak up was Chihuahua-san.

“Why did you name him Michel?”

This is an unexpected punchline, it doesn’t even matter.

“Because I thought a foreigner sounds cool. So I—”

“But doesn’t adding ‘Daigorou’ ruin it?”

“Don’t insult about my father’s name!”

“Ehhhhh…….”

Chiwa was surprised like me.

Next up was Hime.

She blinked a few times.

“That means, master, is not master……?”

“That’s right, I have never been in a relationship with a guy before. Don’t talk about master, I am totally white belt at it. I am a woman who needs to start from wiping the floor of the dojo!”

“Understood.”

Hime took out a piece of cloth from the closet and gave it to Fuyuumi.

Fuyuumi started cleaning the floor of the dojo while sobbing. The cross on her back was hitting against her head, which certainly looks painful.

Then, for some reason, Hime started wiping the floor with her.

“Because I a, also a white belt, so I am doing this with master.”

“Would you still call me master?”

“Master is master, you are my idol, this will not change.”

“……Hime-chan!”

The two of them embraced each other with cloth in hand.

Chiwa was holding her handkerchief against the corner of her eye while saying “how touching”. So anything makes you cry?

Finally, it was Masuzu’s turn.

Different from the other two, she looked serious.

“You kept it a secret up till now, what made you set your heart on it?”

“Because…”

“Let me guess, it’s because I broke up with Eita-kun?”

Uhh—Fuyuumi was silent.

“You like Eita-kun too, right? So you revealed everything about Daigorou,

and want to enter the battle, is this your ulterior motive?”

“……that, you’re right.”

Fuyuumi answered, unable to hide from Masuzu’s sharp glance.

“I like Kidou-kun—Takkun. Ever since ten years ago, in Wakaba Kindergarten. But when we met each other again, Takkun forgot about me, and I was sad and stubborn, so I couldn’t reveal it.”

I can feel the atmosphere that just soften tense up again through my skin.

So you finally spoke up? A-chan…….

“This type of behavior, I can’t accept it.”

Looking at the kneeling Fuyuumi, Masuzu said.

“Eita-kun already has a childhood friend in Harusaki-san. Although I don’t know what happened between you two back in kindergarten, but barging in so suddenly now, it really isn’t too much to say that you have no common sense.”

“Eh?” Not just Fuyuumi, even Chiwa and Hime was surprised.

That isn’t wrong, but how did this came out from Masuzu out of everyone else.

“That’s why I gave up. Because I realized how deep their ties are.”

Seemingly to answer their questions, Masuzu replied.

“Eita-kun and Harusaki-san are supposed to be lovers. This was decided long ago, because they have a lot of memories.”

“I-I also have memories with Takkun!”

I thought she would take out the “marriage registration”, but she seemed to have more dignity than I though.

“Harusaki-san, why don’t you say something? Something like ‘Ei-kun is

mine, I will never give him to you!’ or ‘Eat boric acid roach balls[5] and die vomiting you cockroach!’ or ‘Go gather wild vegetables, get caught in the wild boar traps and roll around in pain and die!’”

“How can I say something like that……”

In contrast to the excited Masuzu-san, Chiwa didn’t seem all that enthusiastic.

“No matter what I say, Ai won’t give up, right? So I can only do what I did in the past, work hard to make Ei-kun turn around and look at me.

Ai stood up, and extended her hand towards Chiwa.

“So we are enemies now?”

“……eh?”

Fuyuumi took the dazed Chiwa’s hand by force, and shook it.

“Love•The•Ragnarok……”

Hime stared at both of them with her eyes shining, although I don’t really understand what she was muttering about, but I am sure she was really moved.

Ignoring the rather excited trio, Masuzu was muttering under her breath.

“Since this is what you want, I have my plans too, prepare yourself.”

“Hey, what are you planning to do?”

Although I said that, Masuzu didn’t seem to have heard it.

“The only person for Eita-kun is Harusaki-san, nobody else can mess with this. They have a sacred bond. Others should be barred from entering. It’s a no-hunting zone for love. NTRNG[6]. I won’t agree to that. Won’t agree. Won’t agree. Won’t agree.

“……”

Scary, how scary, Masuzu-san.

I would consider that a sickness. A sickness in a direction different from before.

Although she was this way back when she was my girlfriend, but even after we break up, it’s still hard to deal with her.

“Pachi Lemon” December•Merry Christmas Special

A must do even during Christmas Night ♥ Popucute Test!

Penname “Holy Dragon Princess of DawnBURNING PRIN PRINCESS”-san’s answer

Q1: What is the true form of Santa Claus?

A1: Satan

Q2: White Christmas! How would you have fun in the snow with him?

A2: KHOLODNYI SMERCH[7]

Q3: What do you want to give to him as a present?

A3: Black leather gloves (fingerless)

Q4:What do you wish to get from him?

A4: Library card

Q5: What is Christmas to you truthfully?

A5: The day where the air pollution on the street gets worse

Your Christmas is: Too fantastical!

Pachi Lemon Editorial Board: Why is it that the only normal answer is a

library card……?

Translator notes and references

- Frustrated here as in the frustration from getting snubbed/rejected/let down.
- Literally flower circle, which looks like a flower, is drawn as a symbol for excellence in Japan.
- Japanese abacus, apparently.
- Now that I think about it I have no idea what a triangular bandage is called.
- Cockroach repellant balls made of boric acid instead of the commonly sold naphthalene. Usually homemade.
- The original sentence was “NTRNG なのよ , I decided not to ruin the beautiful ancronym. Netorare no go, meaning no stealing others’ partner. Netorare, 寝取られ, means cuckold, shortened as NTR, a favorite genre for sick people.
- The strongest move of Cygnus Hyouga from the Saint Seiya manga. This is a technique that captures his cosmos into a single tornado, of which is unleashed via a straight uppercut. Hyouga, “氷河” means glacier.

#6: Recital is Mayhem

#6 リサイタルで修羅場

『パチレモン』12月号・メリークリスマス特別付録

聖夜もやるゾ♥モテカワ度テスト!

ペンネーム「暁の聖竜姫(バーニング・ブリン・ブリンセス)」さんの回答

Q1：サンタの正体ってなんだろうね?

A1：サタン

Q2：ホワイトクリスマス! 彼とどんな雪遊びを?

A2：KHOLODNYI SMERCH

Q3：彼にあげたいプレゼントは?

A3：漆黒の革手袋（指抜き）

Q4：彼からもらいたいプレゼントは?

A4：図書カード

Q5：ずばり、あなたにとってクリスマスとは?

A5：街の瘴気が濃くなる日。

あなたのクリスマスは：妄想しすぎ!

パチレモン編集部より：図書カードだけ現実的なのはナゼ……?

On a Sunday evening when finals are two weeks away.

After studying in the library, I wanted to go to the bookstore for some references en route home, so I walked towards the shopping street, and I met my rival.

“Ugh……”

“You don’t usually say ‘ugh’ when you meet your classmate do you, how hurtful.”

Having said that, Mogami Yura doesn’t look hurt, she only tilted her head.

She wore quite heavily, a thick brown daffle coat with a gray scarf coiling around her neck, a complete winter look. Is she afraid of the cold?

“Kidou-kun is going to karaoke too?”

“Huh?”

“Aren’t you going to karaoke?”

I only noticed it after she said it.

I was standing beside the karaoke I went with Masuzu during the summer holidays.

“No, I am just passing by.”

“You are lying, that’s impossible.”

Mogami stared directly at my eyes.

“Kidou-kun, you look like you want to go to karaoke, I understand.”

“What expression is that?”

“This expression.”

Mogami pointed at her own face.

Even if she said that, it’s no different from her usual “daze” expression in class.

“Go if you want to.”

“That’s what I planned originally, but if I’m going to sing anyway, it’s more motivating to have someone listening.”

“You don’t want to sing alone?”

“I was hoping to get someone to come with me, but everyone seemed to be busy today.”

Mogami looked slightly lonely.

“So, if Kidou-kun can go with me, I will be happy.”

“Even if you say that…….”

What an unexpected turn of events.

Getting invited to karaoke by a girl who isn’t close.

What would the high school boys of the world do in this situation? Instantly agree to it?

No no, I don’t have the reason and need to.

“I’m sorry, I need to buy some reference books in the bookstore.”

“Why. With that karaoke face too?”

“No matter how you see it it’s a bookstore face.”

“Goodbye,” just as I was about to walk around her—

“English Composition Writing Questions and Answers • Third Version.”

Her words stopped me in my tracks.

“Impossible……you have that book!?”

“Yes, although it’s my brother’s old book.”

The book Mogami said was the hidden classic of English composition reference books. It’s said that just by memorizing all the sample sentences in

the book, it will grant you the English knowledge to answer any form or level of question.

But the publisher went bankrupt three years ago, and the book went out of print.

Although I might stumble across it in some old bookstores, it is too expensive and I can’t set my heart on buying it.

“Plea-please lend me the book!”

“Sure.”

Mogami pointed at the karaoke without even smiling.

“Ugh, ho-how despicable!”

“Well then, listen to this one song of mine, Mogami Yura-san’s ‘Blackmail’.”

“So you know it’s blackmailing……”

Seems that I can only stay with her for now.

For reference book, I have to go to karaoke with my rival.

What a weird situation.

♦

Mogami Yura’s singing was spectacular.

The spectacular part about her singing is—

Pop ballad jazz oldies wetern music Vocaloid anime.

No matter what genre she sings, I can only here “Hanihaniha—”

“Hanihaniha—♪ Hanihaniha—n♪”

She looks really happy. Correction, although her expression was the same,

but she was twirling her arms and stamping around, seemingly excited.

After singing twenty songs solo continuously, she asked me while gasping for air.

“How, was it, my, voice!”

“Isn’t it very good……”

I nodded, sipping on my coke.

Mogami was also sitting on the sofa, drinking her iced red tea, which ice had completely melted.

“Singing is great, isn’t it, I can let out all my emotions.”

“Do you have so much stress piled up?”

“Of course, I am always fighting with that monstrous study old lady.

“Ehh……”

Although I can’t imagine how this girl looks like when she’s angry.

“Because I come from a family of doctor, so I must become a doctor. Isn’t this some medieval mentality? I don’t know if they can get civilize any faster.”

Mogami said, knocking my head with the microphone. My hair isn’t even messy.[1]

“……actually, I want to be a doctor too.”

I set my heart and spoke up.

“Hmm, really.”

“So, I want to maintain the position of the first place in our year, and at this stage, I have to do it no matter what.”

Mogami stared at my face.

“Are you talking about the recommendation for our area? The one with the

scholarship.”

“Yes, the one with only one spot.”

“My mother said it’s for the best if I can get that scholarship too.”

“Because public schools are usually not as good. This is probably the aim for everyone who wants to become a doctor.”

Mogami didn’t answer.

The off-key pop song from the other rooms filled our silence.

“Is it because of Chiwa?”

I swallowed.

“Why, would you think that?”

“When Chiwa was staying in my family’s hospital, I heard there was this boy who came to visit her every day, that boy is Kidou-kun, right?”

She knew about it huh.

“But, I heard Chiwa’s body is mostly back to normal, no?”

“Mostly, is not enough.”

I mustered my strength and said.

“If she doesn’t recover completely, to the state where she can take up kendo again, it’s not enough. Not just practicing, she needs to be able to compete once more.”

“Back to normal, huh.”

Mogami emptied the remaining iced red tea.

“But, Chiwa has a new aim now, no?”

——.

“Wha-what do you mean by that?”

“She has been studying quite hard recently, didn’t you realize that?”

“Study? Chiwa!?”

My voice broke.

From first grade to nine grade, she has been scoring below average on subjects other than physical education, and now she’s studying?

“What are you talking about? This is unlike her character, she is someone who would even forget about summer holiday assignments.”

“But, didn’t her results improve recently?”

“Wha……”

That reminds me—

Chiwa scored quite well in the test after summer holiday.

I never pay much attention to her results in the mid-semester exams, did she improved?

“Bu-but why is she studying for? Does she want to attend a first rate university?”

“How’s that possible, that’s more ‘unlike her character’, right?”

“Then, what do you think is the cause?”

“Then, let’s listen to another song. Mogami Yura-chan’s ‘Secret’.”

“Don’t change the subject!?”

Mogami stood up and started singing in Coloratura. Why is she singing without music in karaoke?

At this time, my phone vibrated in my pocket. It’s a message from Chiwa.

[Subject] Tonight

[Content] I have cooked your long awaited dinner for you.

Come back if you are hungry!

Chiwa is cooking for me, I wouldn’t have even thought of that before.

But this is not a bad thing.

Isn’t it a good thing if she can study or cook well?

Although that was what I thought, I can’t get rid of the slight annoyance in my heart.

♦

Her message was so energetic, but—

“……welcome back…….Ei-kun”

As I reached home, a worn out Chiwa welcomed me at the door.

The originally white apron was dyed bright red, and her cheek was dabbed by the same red stuff.

“What happened!?”

Did she got into a bloodshed with Masuzu!? I got into a defensive posture—

“Err, that, I wanted to make omelette rice, but it failed on quite a few places.”

Chiwa lowered her head sadly. Is the red stuff tomato sauce?

……how unlike her.

Usually, she would’ve laughed it away with “ehehe”.

I went to the kitchen, and there was a few plates of fried eggs there.

Every plate is either burnt, or the shape was messed up, it is hard to use these to make omelette rice.

I can’t make it spread out th—inly no matter what, ‘gurun’ and flip it over. Everything ended up ‘mushy’ or ‘battered’[2], this, like this, turn the wrist around—“

She re-enacted the scene, passion overflowing.

“Don’t care about the shape, as long as it’s edible it’s fine.”

I wanted to comfort her, but Chiwa’s voice dropped even deeper.

“I wanted Ei-kun to eat an omelette rice that is delicious and beautiful.

Badump—my heart skipped a beat.

Nonono.

It was just a misjudgement, a slight misjudgement, a type of mental disease.

Chiwa is a family member to me, and I am anti-love.

“Having the thought is enough, okay, let’s eat.”

On the table were two plates of omelette rice, different in size.

Just when I put my palms together, Chiwa said, “Wait”.

“At least, let me do this.”

She drew a heart shape on the omelette with tomato sauce.

“I wanted to do caricature like this even during the school festival, I need to tell Himecchi later.”

“Ha, hahaha…….”

I wanted to tell her, “Don’t learn from those lovestruck brains!” but once I see her blushing harder than a tomato, I can’t say anything anymore.

The wooden salad bowl was filled with tomato, cabbage and lettuce. Seems that she also thought of the nutritional balance. Because Chiwa made it, the knife work was messy—nope, the cabbage is perfectly cut into strips, and the lettuce and tomatoes were cut into bite-size.

“Your cooking has really improved.”

“Saying that when you only ate the salad won’t make me happy, you know?”

Chiwa’s cheeks puffed up.

This childish act of her is still the same.

“But, why did you wanted to cook today?”

“That’s because, that……”

Chiwa looked down, seemingly out of embarrassment.

“A few days ago, when Ai came over to cook, I didn’t feel right about that.”

“What, are you still concerned about that?”

She looked as if she didn’t care that time, but she was actually unhappy about that?

“We are neighbours after all, but I can’t do anything, I feel bad about that.”

“Are you still learning how to cook from Fuyuumi?”

Chiwa shook her head—

“Because, she already said we are rivals.”

“Hmm…”

That’s also the case. However kind Fuyuumi is, she probably won’t do it.

“Maybe I can’t be too friendly with Ai anymore……”

“Don’t say that, aren’t you guys fellow clubmates?”

Chiwa’s puffed her cheeks again.

“No matter how you see it this is Ei-kun’s fault right? You need to accept the fact that you are popular.”

“……”

I can’t talk back to that.

Both of us ate in silence, and just as I emptied the bowl of salad—

“Nah, Chiwa.”

“Say, Ei-kun.”

Our voices overlapped as we called out to each other.

“E-Ei-kun, you can speak first.”

“Ne-never mind, Chiwa you can speak first.”

“There’s no need to be polite, please go ahead.”

“No no no no no.”

After repeating the dumb respect for a bit, Chiwa spoke up.

“You said you are going to the winter prep school right? I signed up for that too.”

“Eh?”

“Although I don’t think I can enter the elite class like Ai or Ei-kun, and the time slot is different, but I think I have the need to tell you first.”

“……o-oh.”

Just like what Mogami said, Chiwa seems to be studying really hard.

“How rare, you would actually attend prep school. Is it an order from aunt?”

“Hmm—you can say that.”

Chiwa smiled, her mouth full from the omelette rice.

Although it is weird for me to say this, but I think there’s more to it than this. However, I have no clue why that is the case. This has never happened before. Even if we don’t have telepathy, I can always know what Chiwa is thinking. Words weren’t needed. As long as we are near each other we can understand each other perfectly.

“So? What does Ei-kun want to say?”

“No-nothing, nothing at all.”

“? Ei-kun is acting weird.”

In the end I still couldn’t ask her why she started studying so hard, I feel like I don’t understand my childhood friend anymore.

Shuraba Collection

～ShuraColle～

Battleship

Fuyuumi

Firepower: 74

Anti-Aircraft: 23

Luck: 5

Armor: 59

Primary Armament: 41cm Epic Victory Cannon

I’m the super dreadnought, Fuyuumi!

I treasure my memories, so much so that I get called behind the time.

I don’t want to lose to Harusaki and Natsukawa!

I’m going for a run in Leyte Gulf[3]—!

Translator notes and references

- A limerick from the Meiji era, “散切り头を叩いて见れば文明开化の音がする。”, meaning something like “by knocking on a messy head you can hear the sound of civilizing”.
- Originally “gucha’ and ‘becha’, sound effects.
- The site of the largest battle of World War II, the Battle of Leyte Gulf, also known as the Second Battle of the Philippine Sea

#7: Mayhem•White

#7 修羅場・ホワイト

修羅これ

修羅場これくしょん
～修羅これ～

戦艦

冬海

火力	74
対空	23
運	5
装甲	59
主力兵装	41cm大勝利砲

超弩級戦艦、冬海よ！
時代遅れと言われようと、昔の思い出は大切。
春咲、夏川には負けたくないの!!
ちょっとレイテ沖まで走ってくるーー！

November has entered its last week.

Ever since then, an unexplainable distance separated me and Chiwa. Even if we meet during club activities, we rarely talk to each other, and Chiwa don’t initiate conversations.

I don’t know what to say to her.

This has never happened in the nine years.

“Are you fighting with Harusaki-san?”

After school, Masuzu walked over to my seat.

“We are not fighting or anything.”

“You’re lying, aren’t you guys quite strain in front of each other recently? It’s obvious.”

“……okay, I won’t deny that.”

“Ahhh, how can that be!”

Masuzu placed her finger on her frowned forehead and sighed.

“If that’s the case, why did even break u—mmghaaghaa!?”

I instantly muffled her mouth with my hand.

“Don’t say it out loud here! What happens if other people overhear us!”

Masuzu stared at me red-faced.

“Wha—what, are you still in love with me?”

“Stop spouting nonsense.”

“Then, it doesn’t matter if I say it, isn’t that so?”

Masuzu’s brain is really sharp, she probably failed to notice it.

“That’s why, we don’t need to announce it so loudly, right? As long as nobody realize it, it can still act as a groin for a while.”

I tried a roundabout explanation which won't matter if someone overhears us, seems like she finally understood.

"……ahhh, that's what you mean."

For some reason Masuzu looked disappointed.

However, she instantly reverted to a sharp stare.

"Compared to that, how about you take care of your own business first? Christmas is coming."

Looks like Masuzu is still very fixated on the whole Christmas thing, she seems more lovestrucked than the lovestruck brains.

"Alright, let's go apologize and kneel in front of Harusaki-san. Tell her 'it's my fault, if you dump me I can't live anymore, no matter if it's the front or back of the shoes I will lick it, please make up with me right now.'."

"No matter how you see it this is too lowly……."

"This much[1] is definitely needed, someone like you, so useless, scarred, traumatized, forever a virgin and an asshole, if you get dumped by Harusaki-san it's over for you."

"Why must I be humiliated to such a state!? Huh huh?"

Masuzu looked surprised.

"Didn't you say this yourself?"

"When did I say this?"

"Am afternoon during summer holidays, in the open air café."

"……."

I remember now.

Is it from when she read the "Hurricane 'Me'" from my Chuuni notebook……I almost forgot about that.

“Alright, the forever virgin and asshole part is what I added myself.”

“That’s the most hurtful part!”

Masuzu-san’s venomous tongue is still the same as before.

“Anyway, I don’t need your help, you don’t need to butt in me and Chiwa’s business.”

“No, I want to help matchmake you no matter what.”

“I told you that is just nosy of you!”

Suddenly, the entire classroom went silent.

I thought it was due to my roar, but when I looked around, everyone was looking at the classroom entrance.

It’s the disciplinary committee—

Five girls wearing the familiar armband approached us, and it’s not a peaceful atmosphere. Our classmates made a path for them hurriedly.

“Kidou, can we borrow a bit of your time?”

The ponytail third year who lectured me before stepped forward.

“I have club activities later…….”

“Just shut up and come.”

Seemingly to block my retreat path, the other disciplinary committee members surrounded me.

What a rare sight.

I have totally no clue towards what is happening. I have not broken the rules, and ever since the second semester, “Jien-otsu’s” activity has become more stable. At any rate, the problematic one should be the one beside me.

“If you want to take Eita-kun away, you will have to defeat me first.”

The problematic child butted in. My ex-girlfriend look too much like the

battle-type main character.

“This has nothing to do with Natsukawa-san, please do not butt in.”

“As the president of the ‘Society of maidens’, there’s no way I will let my underling get kidnap and do nothing.”

Sparks started flying between the two of them.

A fight might break out if this goes on, the atmosphere sure is tense.

“I understand, let’s go.”

To calm them down, I can only do as told.

“Never mind me, go on to the clubroom first.”

I said that to the troubled Masuzu, and was taken away by the seniors.

Now, what will be waiting for me?

♦

I was taken outside of the school building.

Initially, I thought I would be kept in the disciplinary committee room, so I was a bit upset, but now I feel scared since I can’t tell what they want from me.

“That—why are we outside?”

“Whatever, just come and you’ll know.”

The ponytail-senpai, who was leading the way, answered without turning, the other four also remained silent.

After exiting the entrance of the school building, we walked around the school building and continued walking. Are we heading to the second gym building? Or is it the garden behind the school?

I looked at the ground for a second, and found something really strange.

White cotton seemed to be littered on the pavement.

Mixed with fallen leaves, the cotton used to fill cheap futon[2] with were spread across the ground. It’s hard to associate school and futon, the only possibility I can think of is the night duty room, was it torn while drying?

Ponytail-senpai started talking while she continued walking.

“Looks like it’s a white Christmas huh.”

“Huh?”

“White—, Chri—st—mas—“

“……”

Repeating it slowly doesn’t help with my confusion.

Today isn’t Christmas, and it isn’t snowing.

But ponytail-senpai looked serious. Is this a riddle? Does it have anything to do with me getting summoned?

Before I can reply, we reached the garden.

“What is going on……”

The garden was covered with cotton.

So that’s what was going on, it isn’t too farfetched to say it looked like snow, but this is really overdoing it. The first scene I think of is “a little child tearing apart a futon as a prank, litter the cotton everywhere and running away afterwards.”

Next to the cotton covered garden was an old wooden bench.

The red paint had already worn off, the Coke organization logo was too worn out to recognize, it’s the type of bench commonly placed in front of a cheap candy shop[3]. Of course, this shouldn’t appear in a garden, so where is it

from……

Next, the one sitting on the bench is—

“Takkun, thank you for coming.”

Fuyuumi Ai smiled at me.

She patted the seat beside her, seemingly telling me, “Please take a seat”.

“Then, please take your time, both of you.”

Right after ponytail-senpai and the upperclassmen finished the sentence, they left like the wind.

“What is this? What are you trying to pull off?”

Fuyuumi brushed her hair up with a “heh”.

“Everything in this world are supporters of our love huh.”

“What is this, how scary.”

Since I can’t keep standing, I sat down, and Fuyuumi instantly leaned towards me.

I escaped.

She leaned over again.

I escaped.

She leaned over again.

I was already sitting at the end of the bench, and as I approached the cliff, I found a new trap.

“Ch-christmas tree!?”

One of the trees surrounding the school building was beautifully decorated. Gold and silver ribbons, Santa Claus and reindeers crafted from paper, and there were cotton on it too.

“Wow, how beautiful.”

Fuyuumi looked at the Christmas tree, but she still sounded like she was reading from a script.

“Before we talk about whether it is beautiful or messy, isn’t this weird no matter how you see it……”

“What are you talking about, the station should start decorating by next week, no?”

Although that’s the case, but this is not a reason to decorate a tree behind the school building.

While we continued our intense battle, a male and female walking towards the Christmas tree entered my field of vision. They were holding hands and leaning on each other.

“What a couple, I am envious.”

A-chan with her script reading again.

After taking a good look, I realized the female was a disciplinary committee member I met before.

That male looks familiar too.

That clear big eyes—

That beautifully curved eyebrows—

And most importantly, on the fringe, “Ding!” stood a strand of idiot hair[4].

“Senpai!? What are you doing!?”

Disciplinary committee president Ishige Matsuri was wearing cross-dressing as a male.

She wore the male uniform, and tied her hair behind. She was pretty good looking originally, and this getup suits her quite well too, but I can’t see her as a male no matter what.

Ishige-senpai looked at the Christmas tree.

“Fufufufu. It’s a white Christmas, huh—?[5]

A script reading that doesn’t lose to Fuyuumi, and her sentence even changed tone at the end.

“To be together, with senpai, looking at such a beautiful Christmas tree, I’m happy.”

The girl playing the role of the underclassmen was a bit too forceful with her acting.

Fuyuumi nudged my side.

“How wonderful, the two of them.”

“Ehh—?”

“To be able to cuddle and look at the Christmas tree together, it must be wonderful.”

“Ehhhh—?”

Seems like Fuyuumi was seeing a scene totally different from mine.

Putting this aside first, I somewhat understand what is going on.

The disciplinary committee was trying to “create an atmosphere” for us. The plan was, however, too bad, I only noticed it now.

As I was thinking about how to escape, a bunch of people came up.

There was a dozen of people, all of them were wearing a white costume like the people in charge of school lunch duty. Almost all of them were girls from the disciplinary committee.

The instant they surrounded us, they leaned on each other’s shoulder and began singing.

A familiar song during the Christmas season—“Joy to the World”.

“It’s the choir of angels.”

Fuyuumi looked entranced, but I can’t see anything but aliens.

The sight before me made me doubt my eyes—no, my ears. Even Mogami Yura joined the choir. There are sounds of “Hanihaniho—” among them, so I can tell is is her right away. As long as she can sing, she doesn’t care about anything else?”

“Jingle bells—Jingle bell—Jingle all the way—”

As if it was a final blow, a white bearded old man in a red costume appeared. When it comes to Christmas, it’s him. It’s like seeing the final boss appear.

Inside the red costume was ponytail-senpai. She really is showing her capabilities today!

“Come, make your wish. No matter what the wish is, I can make one come true for you.”

And her powers seems to be strong too. Isn’t this way too simple, I didn’t even collect anything.[6]

Fuyuumi made a really happy “Yaahhh—” shout, and shook my shoulders.

“What do we do Takkun! What kind of Christmas present do you want?”

“I want to escape this immediately.”

“A honeymoon overseas? How about a trip to somewhere like Hawaii?”

“How luxurious I would take it if you give me that removing the word honeymoon that is!”

“Hanihani—yay! Honihanihoooo—mmyay!”

“It’s about time you shut up Mogamiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii!”

Just at this time.

“Dora—! Dorara—!”

The person that appeared out of nowhere, hitting the Christmas tree, was Masuzu, the 'Gem of the Natsukawa Family’Crazy Diamond.

The branches shook violently, ribbons, papercrafts and cotton all fell to the ground.

“Wh—what are you doing!? We spent a lot of time to decorate this!”

Masuzu looked at the crossdressing idiot hair-senpai who deepened her voice, and replied solemnly.

“This year’s Christmas ends here.”

The singing stopped.

The choir, fake idiot couple and Fuyuumi all stared at Masuzu with a “what do you mean?” face. Only Mogami looked as if she didn’t sing enough and pouted like a blowfish.

“This year’s Christmas ends here.”

Masuzu repeated herself.

“Due to our country’s security issues still remaining an impending issue, Santa Claus’ usual route can’t be secured, that’s the notice from America.

Although it was Masuzu’s bullshit explanation that lacks originality, but—

“Ugugugu, if it’s for the alliance that there is no other way.”

It seemed to be quite effective against idiot hair-senpai. She was unexpectedly pro-America.

Fuyuumi stood up from the bench.

“Can you not meddle with us! After the atmosphere started to warm up.”

“Look at who’s talking, ignoring the fact that you are a member of the “Society of Maidens”, trying to claim Eita-kun for yourself with numbers,

don’t you feel ashamed of yourself?”

“Totally not! Love is not just beautiful words without meaning!”

“But the fastest one isn’t always the winner too.”

Masuzu squinted.

“Isn’t this enough, can you stop clinging on to Eita-kun? You don’t stand a chance anyway.”

“…….what do you mean?”

Fuyuumi’s voice lowered by a tone.<!—Unsure if tone or octave, please check. -->

“If you can’t understand why I stepped out, it means your love quotient is low. Love master-san.”

“You want me to give way to Chiwa? You, as an ex-girlfriend, dare to say such a thing?”

“Hanihanihoo…”

The one who murmured that wasn’t Mogami, but idiot hair-senpai. Was she overcome by the mayhem? She was trembling nonstop behind the Christmas tree, even the idiot hair switched to vibrate mode.

Masuzu eyes remained on Fuyuumi.

“I, kissed Eita-kun once.”

“I-I know that.”

“We already reached this point, but I still didn’t realize that there is a bond between him and Harusaki-san that can’t be broken. So, when I see you now, it irritates me. It’s like seeing my old self.”

“Don’t talk as if I am the same as you, my bond with Takkun can’t be understood by others.”

Two of them fell into silence, staring at each other.

“Looks like I can’t sing anymore, I am going back.”

The first one to break this silence, was Mogami, being oblivious to the atmosphere.

As Mogami left, the disciplinary committee took the chance at left after her.

In the end, the only people left are the members of “Jien-otsu”.

“Hey, can I go back too?”

“No.”

“Nope.”

They continued to stare at each other, voices overlapping perfectly.[7]

Did anyone actually benefited from this fight?

“Pachi Lemon” December Edition•Merry Christmas Special

A must do even during Christmas night ♥ Popucute test!

Penname “Ai-chan Epic Victory”-san’s Answers

Q1: What is the true form of Santa?

A1: Santa is real! I am Santa!

Q2: White Christmas! How would you have fun in the snow with him?

A2: Falling from the two-person cable car on the way to skiing and warm each other up ♥

Q3: What do you want to give him as a present?

A3: Hand-knitted sweater! Every stitch is filled with my love ♥

Q4: What do you wish to get from him?

A4: A pure white planner diary. I want to fill it with plans with him♪

Q5: What is Christmas to you truthfully?

A5: Love falls[8] heavily, the couples receive blessing, ahhh, and before long, ahhhnn♪

Your Christmas is: way too exciting!

Pachi Lemon Editorial Board: That’s great! Fall in love! Head towards your dream!

Translator notes and references

- By “this much” she is saying that it isn’t too much to ask.
- Using the word mattress causes confusion, so futon was retained.
- 駄菓子屋, shops selling dirt cheap candies, rarely seen in towns anymore, but still fairly common in the rural areas of Japan.
- Ahoge.
- She said “ホワイトクリスマスですわ、だな”.“だな” makes it sound like a question, but “ですわ” makes it originally a statement.
- Yeah, dragon balls.
- It says perfectly, but their lines weren’t exactly the same. The first line was “駄目です”, the second one being “駄目よ”.
- Fall as in rainfall.

#8: Mayhem in the Aquarium

#8 アクアリウムの修羅場

「パチレモン」12月号・メリークリスマス特別付録

聖夜もやるゾ♥モテカワ度テスト!

ペンネーム「アイちゃん大勝利」さんの回答

Q1：サンタの正体ってなんだろうね?

A1：サンタはいるわ! 私がサンタよ!

Q2：ホワイトクリスマス! 彼とどんな雪遊びを?

A2：スキー行ってペアリフト乗って途中でおっこちて遭難して二人で暖めあう♥

Q3：彼にあげたいプレゼントは?

A3：手編みのセーター! 一本一本想いをこめたの♥

Q4：彼からもらいたいプレゼントは?

A4：真っ白なスケジュール帳。彼との予定で埋めちゃう♪

Q5：ずばり、あなたにとってクリスマスとは?

A5：愛が降り注ぎ、恋人たちは祝福され、ああ、やがて、あぁん♪

あなたのクリスマスは：イキすぎィ!

パチレモン編集部より：いいよ！　恋よ!!　夢にかけて夢に！

Although it was Sunday, my mood was pretty bad.

I stayed in the library throughout the entire morning, but I failed to concentrate no matter what. I went through quite a bit to borrow the reference book[1] from Mogami, but I can’t memorize anything, and my hand wouldn’t move.

There was no visible improvement after noon, so I decided to change places.

The weather was good, so taking a walk might lift my mood.

I left the library, and walked towards the back of the station that I rarely go to. Going to the café that I frequented with Masuzu is quite uncomfortable; I will just find a new café.

Once I walked past the bicycle parking lot and entered the park, I saw an old building in the middle of a bunch of leafless ginkgo trees.

Hanenoyama Marine Island.

The name is quite foreign[2], but it is an aquarium.

How nostalgic.

Didn’t I go there on our field trip during my first year of grade school?

Chiwa said “how scary” and cried while watching the sea lion show. Which part of it is scary? Till this date, I still don’t know.

Since my legs moved towards it by themselves, I decided to take a look.

I ignored the dolphin area and the great white shark full scale model, and looked for the huge fish tank. When I see the tunas swimming around happily, I just feel happy—but they say tuna will die if they don’t swim. If that’s the case, are they swimming not because they want to, but because they need to?

“Me too, if I don’t get hugged I will die, so hug me tightly?”

“Yeah, if I don’t hug you tightly…….it’s a matter of life and death!?”

I turned around and saw Hime standing there.

She was wearing a pink beanie and a pure white duffle coat. Hime-chan's plain clothes make her look too much like a big cute angel. She was holding her sketchbook under her arm.

"Hi Hime, what are you doing at such a place?"

"Hug march.[3]"

"……what?"

"This is a state where I am waiting for Eita to hug me."

I thought she would come up with some fantastical setting, but it is just that simple.

"Then, what is the truth?"

"Pilgrimage[4]."

"Your religion is……?"

This is the first time I heard of an aquarium being a religious facility.

Just as I was wondering what kind of setting this is, a voice called out to Hime.

"Sha—sha—sha—sha[5]. Hey Hime! This is the place where the first kiss between the prince and Nero-sama took place, right? This fish tank looks like the one in the background of that very scene, no? Sha—sha—sha!"

The lady laughing was standing in front of the ocean sunfish tank.

"He was going prpr, prpr[6], while hugging Neo-sama tightly with tears in his eyes! That teary face really made me lose control. Onee-san almost drooled~a prince definitely needs to be a pathetic seme, the one who can revert between seme and uke in the second version should reflect on his mistakes in the depths of hell sha—sha—sha!"

The blonde stood like how a model would pose.

She wore a bright red down, under the miniskirt were a pair of cool legs.

However, the words that came out of her mouth reeked of rottenness.

“……what are you doing? Mana.”

The “Sha—sha—sha—sha” laughter stopped.

“Wha—!? W—wh—why are you here you disgusting otaku!”

She trembled until her twintails became messy, and her body tilted backwards.

No matter how you see it, that should be my line, but let’s put that aside for now.

“What’s that, Hime, you came along with Mana?”

“Positive. This is a pilgrimage for the best game of the century “My Dolphin and His Whale”.

“This century still has more than eighty years to go…...”

“Pilgrimage” means “visiting the places that appeared in the work” in anime and gaming culture.

“In that short period of time where we didn’t see each other, Mana was poisoned by BL?”

Was it because she bought doujinshi together with Hime during the summer holidays? Was that the start?

“Th—that’s not it……I’m just here because Hime asked me to accompany her!”

“What you said just now can’t be learnt in a day.”

“I told you, that’s not the case!”

The prpr teary-eyed Mana-san is super cute.

“Last time, you told me ‘otakus are really disgusting’ right? Is that the case[7]?”

“Ye—yeah? Because it’s really disgusting! Don’t come near me don’t touch me I’ll get polluted and rotten!”

“So, how do you feel after becoming the otaku that you hate? Disgusted? Have you looked at yourself in the mirror? Hmm?”

I poked her shoulder, and she made a “mgg, ohh—!” voice, and twisted herself with a face blushing harder than red; it was rather black. Although this would seem immature, but to make this conceited middle school girl bow before me is just too blissful, in fact, it makes me happy!

“Llllet’s talk about something else, I heard you broke up with Suzu! What actually happened!?”

“Hmm, that’s quite a long story…”

For quite some time, the security guard for the aquarium has been coughing on purpose from time to time, which is quite reasonable; we have been making quite a ruckus after all “Eita, do you want to go for some tea?”

Hime tugged my arm.

“To be able to meet each other here is probably what the hyperdemensional thought entity had in mind for us, it’s a mission for me to cheer Eita up.”

“……actually, I’m—”

“—quite happy”, was what I wanted to say, but I can’t do that.

Because Hime was staring at me, I can’t lie.

“……okay.”

I took Hime’s hand and smiled back at her.

“I have a lot to tell you.”

♦

We went to the café inside of the aquarium.

Lunch time just ended, so we got a seat as soon as we got there. From our seat we could see the dolphin section from the window.

I told the two of them what happened recently with Chiwa.

I told them I have no idea why I can’t understand her feelings anymore.

“—I can slightly understand how Eita feels.

After listening, Hime looked at her tea that turned cold and said.

“I also feel like Chihuahua changed recently. It feels like Chihuahua changed into someone else, it’s kind of lonely.”

“But, isn’t this a good thing?”

Mana stirred the ice in her iced coffee and spoke up.

“Anyhow, this means that the Chihuahua grew up, right? You and Hime are both used to the old her, so I can understand if you feel down. But people change, isn’t this normal?”

“I guess so, there’s this originally heterosexual middle school girl who suddenly awakened.”

“……ah?”

Mana stared at me with scary eyes, I moved my eyes away from her and started thinking.

Chiwa knows how to cook now.

Chiwa knows how to study now.

These are definitely good things.

But even if that’s the case, why am I not happy for her?

“Hey, Eita.”

When I recovered, I only realized Hime was looking at me worriedly.

“Actually, I have been hiding something from everyone. Originally, I wanted to wait until it was completed—but I’ll say it now.”

Hime glanced at the angry Mana and continued.

“Mana and me, we are drawing a manga.”

“Manga?”

“It’s a doujinshi, for the game that we talked about just now.”

“So, that’s why you’ve been drawing in the clubroom recently?”

Hime blushed, embarrassed, and nodded.

“Today I came here to collect some data, I wanted to look at the real thing before drawing.”

“Well, I am not really interested in it? I have no choice because Hime wanted me to think up of the script? If I am going to do it anyway I hate doing it half-assedly?”

Although adding a “?” to every sentence is annoying, Mana seemed to be enjoying herself.

“But, why did you think of making a doujinshi?”

“I was really happy during the recent school festival, doing something together with everyone is really great. I hoped the school festival can continue forever, forever. But this is impossible in real life. That is why I wanted to create a world with my own hands.”

“……Hime……”

Using her own hands to create a world—what’s with that.

Totally like the lines of a chuunibyou patient, it’s the usual Hime.

Then, why does she look so cool?

Why does she look so energetic and dazzling?

“Honestly, this is hard on me who got dragged into this.”

Mana said as if she hated it, but she looked really happy.

“If this goes on, I should be going to Hane-kou in the future. I originally thought I would never go to the same school Suzu went to.

“Doesn’t your middle school allow you to enter their affiliated high school unconditionally?”

“……E-even I have my own reasons.”

Mana blushed. It’s quite rare for her to be so unclear with her words.

“If Mana comes to our school, we can have our discussions daily; you’re welcome anytime.

Hug! Hime embraced Mana.

Mana spit out a “tch” as if she’s troubled, but she was grinning herself. Looks like she’s quite fond of Hime, how easy.

“Eita, do you agree with us drawing the doujinshi?”

“Of course, because it’s what Hime wants to do—”

After saying that, I feel like I’m contradicting myself.

I can be happy for Hime for her growth.

But why can’t I be happy for Chiwa? Why can’t I just silently watch over her?

“You’re overthinking it.”

After being told that by Mana, I thought that may be the case.

I hope Hime keeps on being Hime, moving forward along with her chuunibyou.

Isn’t Chiwa still Chiwa?

At least it’s not like someone replaced the original Chiwa.

“Thank you, both of you.”

I lowered my head at the two of them.

The cloud that has been blocking my heart seems to have faded away.

♦

Hime said she wanted to collect more data, so I decided to go home after parting ways with her.

But before that, I had something to confirm.

I left Hime, who was silently sketching a shark specimen, and talked to Mana.

“Hey, how has Masuzu been lately?”

“I don’t—know, I haven’t seen her in a while.”

Mana’s reply was cold and curt.

“Suzu is still living alone in her apartment, I stay in the main residence—we are always separated.”

Mana stared at me.

“Let’s change the subject…who suggested breaking up first?”

“It was Masuzu, it felt like I got dumped.”

“Hmm~?”

Mana peered at my eyes, with a look of disbelief.

“From what you said, it feels like it is because you had an affair with your childhood friend.”

“Well, that’s not exactly what happened.”

My reply was ambiguous because that’s not that far off from the truth.

Chiwa had something to do with the removal of our fake relationship.

But, I can’t get any information from Masuzu, who closed her heart.

“So how do you feel about Suzu now? Do you hate her?”

“That’s not it.”

I shook my head.

“But, I don’t understand what Masuzu is thinking. I don’t understand her anymore.”

“Hmm…”

Mana puffed her cheeks.

“Then, why don’t you go out with that Chihuahua?”

“Huh?”

“I want you to stop holding hopes towards Suzu. If she has lingering affections for you, isn’t that painful?”

“……”

I wanted to say “You’re just meddling too much”, but—

“You rea---lly! Like your sister don’t you!”

“Hu—uuhhhhhh!? How did the subject turn to me! Do you understand Japanese? *Do you understand Japanese!?* [8]”

Ohh, such fluent English, as expected of a blonde.

I hurriedly escaped the angry Mana, and started thinking.

Me and Chiwa going out—is it possible?

Will such a day come?

♦

When I left the aquarium, the Sun was already setting.

I wasted all my time, I should go back home and collect the washed clothes, then start studying.

When I decided to walk towards the station, a black wall suddenly appeared from the side and blocked my way.

It’s Mana’s bodyguard-cum-driver—Yasuoka-san.

“How do you do? Highschool boy.

“I-I’m doing well.”

My voice cracked. Can you not appear suddenly, it’s startling!

“Mana-ojousama, is she still inside?”

“She says she still need a bit more time.”

Yasuoka-san nodded and muttered “Is that so,” in a low voice.

“Then, let me send you home.”

“N-No-No thanks, I’m fine with taking the train.”

I remember his careless driving the last time I rode in his car. I still get the chills when I think about it.

“You should accept the goodwill of the boss.[9]”

Yasuoka-san walked away without waiting for my reply.

The black limousine was parked at the rotary in front of the aquarium.

The backdoor opened, and a man in a suit walked out.

“Hi, nice to meet you.”

I was greeted by an unknown adult.

He looks like a successful person, that’s the first impression he gave me. He had a calm smile, giving off an honest vibe. He looks 35 years old or so, but sounded quite commanding, so he’s probably older than that. He wore an expensive-looking suit, probably a president or director.

No, hold on.

He was in Yasuoka-san’s car, that means he’s a member of the Natsukawa family.

Adding that to “president or director”, that means—

“Nice to meet you, I’m Masuzu’s father.”

As if he’s trying to confirm my thoughts, he handed me a business card.

“If it’s possible, can you spend some time with me? I won’t waste too much of your time.”

I swallowed my saliva.

I puffed out my chest, and took a step forward.

“You came at the right time, I have something to ask you too.”

I can’t run from this.

I need to get all the answers from this father who is torturing Masuzu.

Light Cruiser|Kidou

I’m the bookworm class light cruiser, Eita.

Ah? War? Just leave those things to the girls.

I am working hard for my goal of being remodeled into a hospital ship.

Light Carrier|Natsukawa•Kou

I’m the second vessel of the Natsukawa class.

Let me show you a beauty that is incomparable to a standard aircraft carrier.

By the way, do you know where Hime is?

Heavy Cruiser|Asoi

I’m Asoi.

Not conflicting with the other ships is my principle.

……are you that intrigued about my armor?

Translator notes and references

- English Composition Writing Questions and Answers • Third Version, a masterpiece.
- ”Marine Island” is written in katakana.
- Original being “ギュットマーチ” (gyutto march), ぎゅっと usually means “tight” or in this case, hug (抱), since it is frequently used together (Eg: ぎゅっと抱きしめて) , and used independent of 抱 informally. She was using gyutto in the conversation above too.
- ”聖地巡礼” can mean either pilgrimage or visiting the places that was used as a setting in a fictional work in what people call the “otaku terminology”.
- It’s supposed to be a laugh.
- prpr is the abbreviation of ペロペロ, it pretty much means licking.
- He ended the sentence with “よね”, and he followed up with “ねえねえ？”, making it a very teasing tone.
- She said this in English.
- It’s unclear if it’s “a man of high standing” or “adult” in this case, as the word 大人 can be interpreted as either.

#9: Mayhem in the Limousine

#9 リムジンの中は修羅場

軽巡洋艦 **季堂**

ガリ勉型軽巡・季堂だ。
あ？　戦争？　んなもん女どもに任せとけ。
病院船へのモデルチェンジ目指して頑張るぞ。

軽空母 **夏川・航**

夏川型の２番艦よ。
正規空母に負けない魅力、見せてあげるわ。
ところで、ヒメどこに行ったか知らない？

重巡洋艦 **遊井**

僕が遊井さ。
他艦と衝突しないのがモットーなんだ。
……僕の装甲、そんなに気になる？

Once I closed the backseat door, the car started moving silently.

I thought he would drive recklessly like before, but the meter showed a speed that’s under the speed limit, and he slows down at the pedestrian crossing and at turns. Driving this safely is definitely better; it’s probably because the president is in his car.

The aforementioned president is sitting right beside me.

I have a lot to ask this person, but at this moment I don’t know where to start.

“Erm[1], I heard my daughter is very much under your care.”

Masuzu’s father started talking with me.

“I heard you are in the same club, what club is that?”

He should’ve heard of it before, and he’s still acting dumb.

“It’s called the ‘Society for Bringing out your Maiden Self’.”

“Maiden huh. What a befitting club.”

Masuzu’s father smiled and said calmly.

However, the first impression he gave me was that he wasn't sincere at all; his behavior made me suspect that he was actually thinking the complete opposite of what he was saying.

“Masuzu is known as the ‘Natsukawa’s family gem’ in Sweden, right?”

“Mm. She is a daughter I am proud of.”

“Because you’re proud of her, you have to flaunt her off like a decoration?”

Even I knew that my voice was sharp when I said that.

Ever since Mana told me during summer training camp, it has been on my mind.

“Did Mana say that?”

Masuzu’s father smiled bitterly.

“Although I can’t deny I have such thoughts, I do it because I love my daughter. This is what she wished for, I did not force it on her.”

“Is that true?”

I raised my voice.

“I heard that you separated Masuzu and her mom, and forcefully took her away.”

That is…a misunderstanding.”

The father looked down, as if he’s lonely.

“Only after I talked it through with her mother did I take custody of her. This is a legal contract with concessions from both sides. I didn’t do anything unreasonable…….but, Masuzu wouldn’t believe me.”

“Why did you divorce her mother in the first place?”

I know it was impolite of me to ask, but I couldn’t stop myself.

I went through a huge shift from my parents having a divorce after all.

“Because I don’t love her anymore.”

“……..”

Hmm?

Just, because of that?

I thought he would give a lot more reasons that sounds acceptable.

“Is it rare for a change of heart to happen?”

As if he saw through my surprise, the father shrugged.

“‘I loved something before, but it’s different now,’ it’s the same for books, movies, and food, even clothing, changing your heart towards a member of the opposite gender isn’t weird, right?”

“Clothing and people are different.”

“What I mean is, one’s thinking will change.”

The father stared into my eyes and continued.

Looks like he isn’t trying to brush me off like I’m a child.

“For example, are you still holding on to the dreams or fantasies you write in your notebooks when you were small? Can you still show it to people proudly now?”

“……that is–“

I thought he wouldn’t know about the chuuni notebook, but this example was really on point.

“You can’t, right?”

“……”

“It’s the same for everyone, even me.”

The father said, as if he was consoling me.

“I heard you have a childhood friend, you and her, do you still have an unchanging bond between you two?”

“……our relationship, is good…….”

I averted my sight.

“Then, what about the other childhood friends aside from that girl? Don’t you have friends that you separated from and have forgotten? Not even one?”

“……”

I can’t help but think of Fuyuumi Ai.

Another childhood friend whom I originally forgot about.

“Memories that you gave up on, childhood friends that are distant now, it’s the same with this. To love the same girl forever is really hard.”

He hit me on the shoulder—

“That’s why, you don’t need to worry about having broken up with her, don’t hold it in your heart, forget about it.”

“So, is that why you came?”

The roundabout conversation was just a “wedge” to avoid me Masuzu and I getting back together.

“Does Masuzu and I going out go against your will that much?”

“The problem is not you.”

The father leaned on his seat—

“My business will grow bigger, and I plan to extend into more countries. I will let her attend a university overseas, and find a suitable marriage partner for her.”

He said these surprising words without faltering.

In the end it’s just a marriage of convenience.

I actually heard this development that seemingly only appears in fiction in reality.

“You’re just using Masuzu aren’t you!”

“As long as you are born in the Natsukawa family, this is unavoidable.”

The father said, decisively.

“Of course, I don’t think this isn’t a sad thing for her, so this time, I agreed to her plea.”

“Masuzu’s plea?”

“Haven’t you heard of it?”

The father looked surprised.

“She knelt on the ground and begged me for it.”

At that very instant, I couldn’t understand what he was telling me.

“She begged me. She said ‘I’ll listen to everything father[2] says, so please let me spend my three years of high school in Hanenoyama.’ And ‘Please do not take away my last memories’.”

That Masuzu.

That egoistic and proud girl, that irritating Masuzu, would kneel on the ground?

Kneeling in front of this disgusting father?

“That girl, she went that far……”

I misunderstood her.

When she didn’t take my hand in front of Hime, I thought I was rejected.

When she said she wanted to support me and Chiwa’s relationship, I always thought she had some ulterior motive, up until just now I still had this thought, because I couldn’t understand her true self.

But, this one thing is definitely true.

Masuzu “wants to stay here”.

This is the only thing that can’t be questioned.

“……actually, I still have things I have yet to say.”

“Hmm?”

I stared at the father’s frowning face, and told him.

“Actually, I am not Kidou Eita, I can’t even be considered human. My real name is 'Holy Dragon Knight of DawnBURNING FIGHTING FIGHTER'. The only survivor of the dragoons. I’m also known as the strongest warrior in the universe.

I used a polite tone[3] out of nervousness.

“What are you talking about?”

Although he was rolling his eyes, I had to continue.

“I’m not just strong, but I’m popular. For example, Ayanami Aruka, she’s an angel, her element is light, and she’s my classmate. Of course, she’s beautiful, hates to lose and stubborn, her catchphrase is ‘are you stupid?’, although she’s usually quite curt[4], but she loves me a lot.”

“……”

“Her CV is Hayashibara Yuuko.”

How is that—I tried to make that expression, but the father looked serious. Can you at least laugh?

“CV is character voice.”

So I tried to explain.

“……”

The father’s expression grew darker, it’s just a CV, can you hurry up and laugh.

“What exactly are you talking about?”

Irritation could be heard in his voice.

I tried to change the pace that he couldn’t keep up with.

“You said ‘Can you still show your fantasies to people proudly now?’ just now, right?”

I didn’t let go of this opportunity, and continued with my questions.

I threw away my feeling of shame.

“Yes, of course I can do that. Your daughter read my fantasies out loud over and over again; for me, it’s already—nothing. It’s like popping the blisters on a hand that frequently holds bamboo swords, in the end it won’t hurt anymore.”

“I don’t understand, what are you trying to say?”

“Some things will never change, you bastard father.”

Zun.[5]

My fist hit the seat; even I didn’t realize it.

“Indeed, ‘I loved her before, it’s different now’ does happen. But, that doesn’t mean the fact that you loved her will disappear. Besides that, future endeavors happen because of past ones. Masuzu and I are the perfect example of this. Because of my fantasies, I was able to meet Masuzu.”

“If that’s the case.”

The father smiled bitterly.

“Isn’t that just futile? You have already broken up with her.”

“Then, let me ask you—”

I opened my fist.

“You and Masuzu’s mom, is that also futile?”

The father went silent again.

Different from the silence out of bewilderment just now, this is a silence from him thinking.

“It’s wasn’t futile. At least I got a gem, Masuzu.”

The car slowed down.

It stopped in front of my house, and I got down from the backseat.

“At your age, maybe you won’t understand.”

The father screened down the window.

“Human hearts will change, love will move on. This is a natural occurrence, maybe you’ll call it betrayal, but there will come a day when you will understand it.”

“That day will never come.”

I stared at the father.

“Correction, I won’t let it come.”

“……is that so?”

The window closed and the car started moving.

From the driver seat, Yasuoka-san raised his thumb from an angle that only I can see.

“Ei-kun?”

Chiwa peeked from the Harusaki house gate.

“Was that someone from the Natsukawa family?”

“Her father.”

Chiwa said “really!?” and stared at the leaving car—

“I want to meet him too……what kind of person is he?”

“An asshole.”

I spat and answered.

Maybe he has his reasons, adult reasons. This kind of thing, even a brat like me can understand.

However, I can’t understand what he just said, I can’t accept it.

This is not for Masuzu.

It’s for me to stay as me.

Translator notes and references

- He didn’t actually say erm, but this is the closest thing to what he said.
- She refers to her father as otou-san.
- He ended his last sentence with “-masu”, which makes it very polite.
- Tsun-tsun.
- It’s just a sound effect.

#10: Taking Back First Place is Mayhem

#10 首位奪還の修羅場

自分のため。千和のため。
目には見えない、大切に思える何かのため。
迷いを吹っ切り、いざ期末!

For me, for Chiwa.

For something I feel is important but invisible to my eyes.

Cutting apart my confusion, come at me, finals!

After a long absence from it, I stood in the kitchen wearing an apron.

After filling the bowl with minced chicken, wine, miso, sesame oil, eggs and some mayonnaise to bring out the flavor, I stirred it.

To make good chicken balls[1], stirring is important.

Just by skipping this little bit of effort, the texture will be bad. Even if the seasoning is perfect, it is still far from being good. Before it gets viscous and soft, the stirring can’t stop.

Stir stir, stir.

It isn’t joyful, but it isn’t a pain either.

Stirring earnestly just to make chicken balls.

No matter who is making it, male or female, ex-chuunibyou or anti-love or whoever else, as long as it is well stirred, it will be delicious.

“Ei-kun?”

I suddenly noticed Chiwa standing in the living room.

She seemed to have entered from the dust outlet, I was too absorbed in stirring so I didn’t notice.

“I’m sorry, calling you over so suddenly.”

“What’s up? Inviting me to dinner suddenly.”

“That’s because eating hotpot alone is quite boring.”

I don’t know if that is considered an answer, but I still answered it this way.

“Can you cut the nappa cabbage[2] and spring onions? Also, pick out the softer garland chrysanthemum[3] leaves and tear them into pieces.

Chiwa nodded, and grabbed the knife beside me.

A “zaku[4].” voice started appearing amidst the sound of her tearing the leaves.

“You’re doing a wonderful job.”

“Mm—but it’s still slow. I can’t cut like how Ei-kun does with a ‘don don’ sound.”

“The sound isn’t important, as long as it’s well cut it’s fine.”

Alright, that’s it for the chicken balls.

After washing my hands, I took the lid off the earthen pot that was soaked in kombu beforehand, and added some light soy sauce and sweet sake. Since chicken balls have a lot of umami[5] itself, the seasoning needs to be light.

“As I thought, I may like cooking.”

“What’s with you all of a sudden?”

“Nothing, I just feel that way.”

Cooking will reflect the hard work and effect you poured into it, and you can immediately savour the results.

This type of entertainment is rare.

“But tomorrow is the exams, is this okay?”

Chiwa’s stopped tearing the garland chrysanthemum and looked at me worriedly.

“The finals are not our last exam, there are still quite a few. If I have to cut down my time spent on cooking to study, I can’t take first place for three years in a row.”

I used to be upset when I couldn’t spend all my free time on studying, and was very particular about my time spent on studying. As Masuzu said, I am a total “bookworm”.

However, three years in high school is a long time.

If I were to make a comparison, it’s like a marathon, at the very least, not a sprint.

If I enter the medical field, there will be a lot of studying to do; heavier than the current exams.

If that’s the case, I should learn how to “rest for a bit”.

For the final victory.

“That doesn’t feel like Ei-kun.”

Chiwa muttered.

“Huh? What do you mean by that.”

“Ehehe, I can’t really express it well.”

Chiwa’s eyes were smiling.

So, she is saying this isn’t a change in a bad direction?

“By the way, there is not enough meat, no? Is it just that one bowl?”

“That is three servings of minced meat.”

“Not enough not enough! Put in the pork too~”

Chiwa opened the refrigerator and took out a bag of pork ribs. Her movement was so natural I almost forgot that was my own refrigerator.

“That’s for tomorrow’s packed lunch!”

“It’s fine it’s fine! I’ll give you a portion of my lunch tomorrow…….ah, there are shrimps too!”

Now the dishes in my lunch are decreased. Damn, chicken ball hotpot is

becoming a yosenabe[6].

The two of us sat around the boiling pot on the portable gas stove.

Just when we were finishing the steaming hot chicken balls and were getting comfortable and satisfied.

“Can you tell me why you started studying so hard?”

It slipped out of my mouth.

I asked her what I couldn’t before very naturally.

Chiwa put down her chopsticks and stared at me.

“I want to become a teacher in a school[7].”

“……”

I didn’t feel surprised at all, despite it being the first time I heard her say it.

Chiwa, a teacher.

Logically, this wouldn’t be a suitable career for her, but for some reason I feel it suits her.

“We went to Hane-kou this summer right? I thought about it when I was looking after the underclassmen, I think this might be what I want to do.”

“Do you want to be the advisor for the kendo club?”

Chiwa shook her head.

“Although it would be best if I can, I don’t have a particular club in mind. Softball is fine, wind orchestra is fine, theater club is fine. As long as I am helping people who are working hard, I am happy with it.”

“People who are working hard, huh?”

Now I understand why I felt it was a suitable career before.

Chiwa is someone who finds joy in “working hard”, someone who can practice swinging the bamboo sword a hundred times happily.

I think there are two possible routes for this type of person.

One is a road where the person works hard themselves.

The other is “supporting others who are working hard”.

Although the latter looks easy, it’s actually not the case. To stay beside someone who works hard, if you don’t work similarly hard, there will not be an equal standing.

“You’re really great, Chiwa.”

Although Hime grew up, Chiwa also grew up.

Without realizing it, I got left behind—

“What are you talking about?”

Chiwa stared at me, bewildered.

“The reason I am thinking this way is because I saw Ei-kun.”

Before I realized it, I was staring at Chiwa.

“Wh-why? How?”

“Honestly, Eita, you really don’t understand yourself.”

“Hah—”, Chiwa sighed loudly.

“Someone as determined as Ei-kun is really rare. So overly serious, so stubborn yet so diligent. Really, you are so close to becoming an idiot.”

“……um……”

I don’t know if she’s looking down on me.

“I was always thinking what to do, falling for this kind of Ei-kun. But, it is actually quite easy. I just need to work as hard as Ei-kun. This way, we can be together, no?”

“……is that so……”

“Eh, what do you mean by ‘is that so’?”

No.

Because, that, how to put that.

Although I felt embarrassed, for the first time, I had a sincere feeling.

Chiwa.

My childhood friend Chiwa, who used to be like a little sister.

She loves me so sincerely, so seriously.

“You really do like me huh.”

“Is that what you should be saying now!?”

Chiwa looked surprised from the bottom of her heart. I can’t help it, I haven’t been actually popular. It has been different since I entered high school.

“Then let me say it another time? Listen carefully.”

Chiwa smiled.

“I like Ei-kun. I really like the Ei-kun who works hard.”

“……”

How.

How can she say something like this without getting embarrassed…

“So, please, from now on, please let me continue liking you.”

“……d-do whatever you like.”

In the end, I can only answer her this way.

As long as I am still anti-love, if someone harbors feelings towards me, I can only push them away.

“Pfft—how dishonest.”

However, Chiwa brushed it away with a laugh.

How joyful is this actually—

For someone twisted like me, I can’t understand that feeling.

However, this is something I can’t lose, definitely can’t.

“Hey, Chiwa.”

“Hmm?”

“From now on, come over to cook at my house in alternating days.”

“But, this will go against what we decided on back in August—”

I stopped Chiwa with my hand—

“You said it before right? You don’t want to be spoiled by me anymore, so we shall be eating our own meals for now.”

“Mm.”

“You’re not behaving like a spoilt child anymore, if you can help me cook it will be helpful, and cooking for me will be a good change of pace. So—”

I extended my hand towards Chiwa.

“So, let us help each other.”

A smile started to appear on Chiwa’s face as she stared at me.

“Cooking only for one person doesn’t taste good, right.”

“I know right? Making two or three servings is just right.”

We shook hands above the earthen pot.

I’m happy to have my extended hand shook in return.

“By the way, Ei-kun, the water is boiling.”

“Ohh!? I forgot to turn off the gas, what a waste!”

Let’s eat some udon with mizuna on top. Adding some eggs in it to make a porridge is good too.

No matter what we do, it should be quite warming.

Because I’m eating together with Chiwa

♦

The next morning, I arrived at school two hours earlier than usual.

I turned on the heater in the empty classroom, reading my textbook while waiting.

“Eh, I’m second?”

The person I was waiting for appeared with a surprised voice and expression.

Mogami Yura, so the rumor that she is always the first one to enter the classroom real?

“What’s going on, aren’t you a bit too early today?”

“Oh, I’ll be coming this early from now on.”

I handed my textbooks to the surprised Mogami.

I lowered my head as much as I could and said.

“Please! Please teach me English and mathematics!”

Mogami glanced at the textbooks—

“Aren’t these the textbooks for middle school?”

“Yes, these are enough.”

When it comes down to it, my weakness was not studying in middle school. There are plenty of English vocabulary and grammar that I failed to grasp, and formulae that I didn’t understand completely.

Although I managed to ignore it up till now, it’s still like building a house on a weak base, continuously expanding it. As long as the base is weak, no matter how long you take it isn’t possible to build a skyscraper. It’s impossible to move forward.

That’s why I should take a step back.

Back to the part I understand.

It doesn’t matter if it’s middle school or elementary school, I should take a step back.

And if I need to learn from someone, learning from the smartest person is the fastest route. It doesn’t matter if that person is a rival. If it prevents me from achieving my goal, I can feed my pride to dogs.

Mogami took off her coat and replied nonchalantly.

“It’s fine, if you will go to karaoke with me again, that is.”

“Ugh.”

To listen to that “Hanihaniho—” again?

“Eh, are you ‘’that’’ happy?”

Mogami said without even smiling.

……if that’s the case I can’t help it. Acting, acting.

“Ya—yay—karaoke with Mogami-san—. I’m so happy—”

“To answer your support, let Yuraa Mogami sing “Even Those of Low Ability can Outdo Themselves when Flattered[8]”.

“Here!?”

Yura-chan’s recital suddenly started.

Endure it, me! This is for the future vengeance[9], endure it for now!

♦

When you’re passionate about something, time flies.

With the help of Mogami, “Operation Kidou Eita restudying from middle school” went without a hitch. Although I don’t feel happy about it, this girl is good at teaching. Feeding my pride to the dogs was the correct choice.

After telling Mogami this, she muttered “Pride chicken” softly. By the time I realized this was a wordplay on my “feeding my pride to the dogs”, school had already ended. When you’re making a joke, at least make it sound like a joke. Please don’t look so serious.

Despite what I said, it didn’t go without a single problem.

Masuzu, knowing that I was studying together with Mogami, came to complain about it to me during the break.

“You have to choose Harusaki-san’s friend to cheat on her with. What are you thinking?”

“I’m not cheating on her. This is what they call lose a dime and win a dollar.”

“Even if you become a professor in proverbs, I won’t allow it.”

I am not interested in taking away the title of the waitress.

“To regain first place, learning from the one holding first place is the fastest way.”

“Don’t you have any pride?”

I explained it to an angry Masuzu.

“Do you have the habit of eating fried chicken during Christmas? Although I don’t know who started it, but for me, that’s the day I don’t want to eat fried chicken the most in the entire year.”

“……huh?”

Don’t look at me like I’m an idiot, alright, let me explain.

“Christmas is a day when fried chicken shops are a few times busier than usual; there will be long queues. When this happens, won’t I cause trouble to people who like fried chicken, who can’t help but eat them every day? To queue up just because of Christmas night, won’t it make it hard for people who actually love fried chicken to get them? And after Christmas is over they won’t even look at fried chicken anymore, why? This phenomenon—it’s saddening. This is why I wanted to take a road different from others, this is my pride.”

I thought I said it full of passion, but Masuzu-san’s eyes were cold.

“The story you just said, what does it have to do with your pride?”

“Tha—that’s……pride chicken……”

“What, does, it, have, to, do, with, your, pride?”

Uoh. Masuzu-san is actually mad……?

“According to your logic, we shouldn’t eat cakes anymore?”

“Cakes are different, I will eat them at my birthdays.”

Isn’t it said that desserts are stored in a different stomach[10]? You can’t compare that to what I said just now.

Masuzu sighed deeply.

“If Harusaki-san knew about this, won’t she get angry?”

“There’s no problem with that, I already informed her about it.”

“If that’s the case, Harusaki-san is really Harusaki-san. If I was your girlfriend, I would never let this happen.”

After saying that, Masuzu’s expression changed instantly with a “hah”.

“What’s wrong?”

“……sorry, nothing.”

Just when I thought her voice became lower, she dragged herself back to her seat.

I think I need to talk things through with Masuzu after this, but I need to focus on preparing for the finals.

With training from Mogami, I can overcome the weakness from my middle school life.

However, my preparation on the high school syllabus is lacking compared to usual. I’m especially worried about the memory based subjects like social studies and the sciences.

If I want to set my sights on the future, this is unavoidable. However, I can’t have the attitude of “it’s fine if I don’t get first place this term”.

I’ll just try my best.

♦

And so, examination period “is over”.

In my three years of middle school, that phrase had two different meanings.

The first one is literal, that all papers ended.

The other one is—the results are horrible, “it’s over”.

“Ugmmmm……”

“What’s wrong, why that troubled look?”

I was groaning in my seat since this morning, and it got Kaoru worried.

“The results for the finals are out, don’t you want to go and take a look?”

“I’m not very confident this time.”

If my usual confidence rating is 100, this time it’s only 80.

Can I overtake Mogami and take first place? I had a strange feeling.

“Don’t talk like that, come take a look with me.”

Kaoru dragged me by the hand to the announcement board in front of class 1-5.

Although Kaoru usually isn’t this forceful, there are times when he would become assertive. Mostly when I get nervous.

I looked at the notice board while being grateful to my best friend’s white fair hand. Only people in the top hundred will get their name posted on the board.

“Eita, why are you looking at the bottom?”

“No, that is—”

“Eita won’t be this low, you should start looking properly from the top.”

I made him angry.

But I have other reasons to start searching from the bottom.

“……found it!”

Harusaki Chiwa! Eighty-eighth place!

That girl did quite well, did she finally cement herself in the top hundred?

“Chihuahua-chan is great, there’s no doubt people with high concentration can understand quite fast.”

“What are you talking about, that’s far from being good, she should at least get into the top fifty.”

Although she doesn’t need to set her goals at the highest level, to enter a university with an education department, I hope she improves herself to a higher level.

Kaoru grinned and said.

“You look really happy yourself.”

“Th—tha—that’s not the case!”

I denied his claim firmly, and went back to look for my name.

Then, it ended instantly.

The instant I saw my name back where it belongs, I was really happy.

“……!”

I almost screamed out, but I held it back at the last moment.

Getting first place is a given, that’s my goal after all.

“That’s good for you, Eita.”

“Yeah, thank you,”

I think not saying “congratulations” is a natural kindness of Kaoru.

At that very moment, someone hugged me from behind.

“Takkun, you did great! Congratulations!”

“O—oh, thanks.”

Fuyuumi held my hand with both her hands, and stared at me with watery eyes.

“I, got second place.”

“Eh! Really?”

I raised my head and looked at the notice board, and found Fuyuumi’s name beneath mine.

Mogami Yura is eleventh place.

What’s wrong with her, did she make careless mistakes? Or did she fill the answer sheet with “Hanihaniho—”?

“To become a woman who can stand proudly beside Takkun, I was working hard in the dark. Recently Takkun has been working really hard, so I can’t lose either, because I have a dream. Did I tell Takkun about it before? Actually, I want to be like mother—”

“Ah! Mogami!”

I stopped the girl with the braided hair who passed behind Fuyuumi.

“Morning, Eita-un, are you perhaps going to the toilet too?”

“Not the toilet! I’m here to check the results!”

Mogami exclaimed “Ah!” with a happy expression.

“So these people are not lining up for the toilet, I almost went to the second year’s toilet.”

Who cares about that, you can just go back home, your house is so close anyway.

“Let’s not talk about this, why are you eleventh place?”

“I think, might it be that my results are worse than the tenth place, but better than the twelfth?”

Uahh—. Although I can understand her words I don’t understand what she is trying to say—

Mogami took the opportunity to slip into the toilet like a ninja while I was holding my head.

“Hey, can you listen to me for a second? Hey Takkun!”

When I came to myself, Fuyuumi was tugging at my sleeve.

“So—sorry, what’s it?”

“I’m talking about something important, you should listen carefully! You know, the reason I’m working hard is because Takkun and mother’s—”

“A-chan.”

Kaoru knocked Fuyuumi’s shoulders.

“I have something to do at the school store, can you come with me?”

“Can you bother me with that later, I’m talking to Takkun now.”

“It’s fine, please, we are ‘’’childhood friends’’’ right?”

Kaoru pushed the grumbling Fuyuumi by the shoulders and walked away.

Just like what happened before, it’s rare for Kaoru to be this assertive.

I instantly understood his intentions.

“Ei-kun.”

I turned to the source of the voice and saw my childhood friend standing there with her right hand in the air.

Chiwa’s little right hand high-fived my own right hand.

“Slap”—a satisfying sound rang out, and we stared at each other and laughed.

“Not bad.”

“You too.”

Just that was enough, we don’t need any long conversations.

At that very instant, I decided our menu for the night.

My homemade hamburger steak.

Translator notes and references

- The original word was 鶏団子, it’s not exactly dumpling, but grounded chicken paste made into balls.
- Chinese cabbage.
- Shungiku in Japanese, glebionis coronaria, herb commonly used in Asian cooking.
- Sound effect from cutting
- A “savory taste”, one of the five basic tastes but still somehow don’t have a more English name.
- A hotpot made up of a lot of ingredients. Common ingredients include meat, seafood, tofu, vegetables, egg, noodles
- It’s unclear whether it’s just a school or her own school. Japanese too ambiguous with their sentence structure.
- 豚もおだてりゃ木に登る. Proberb, literally “even pigs can climb trees if you flatter them.
- In the novel the saying 臥薪嘗胆 was used, literally “sleeping on wood and tasting gallbladder”, originated from China, in where the son of a defeated king, in order to not forget the shame of defeat, slept on wood every night and hung the gallbladder of a bear, as the bitterness rekindles his vengeance. He ended up defeating the enemy. It’s used to represent enduring hardship.
- Betsubara, Japanese has the concept of a stomach specially made to store dessert.

#11: Not Letting Go, Ai

#11 ゆずれない、愛衣

Forcefully pulling, tugging.

Fuyuumi Ai was forcefully pulled along in the corridor in the direction of the school store.

“Let me go, Kaoru! I said, Kaoru!”

She didn’t think Kaoru would be so strong, he looks so much weaker than her.

After turning in the direction opposite to the store, Kaoru let go of her.

This place is far from the classroom, and there’s no one in sight.

“What’s this, aren’t you going to the store?”

“I’m sorry, that’s a lie.”

Kaoru’s long eyelashes fell, as if they were apologizing.

“I’m doing this because I can’t stay silent and see A-chan get hurt deeper than this.”

“What do you mean by that?”

Is he talking about Chiwa appearing before Eita when they left?

Ai thinks she’s being looked down upon.

She knows there’s a strong bond between Chiwa and Eita, they’re childhood friends after all, they should have a relationship that fits the time they spent together.

However, she has a “promise” herself.

It is in her pocket at the moment. The marriage registration. The bond written in clumsy handwriting, strongly holding together the ten years of blank space between them.

“Kaoru also thinks the person Takkun likes is Chiwa?”

“I’ve known them since middle school, I always thought no other girl can

come between the two of them.”

“If that’s the case, how do you explain Natsukawa-san?”

“Hmm, I was quite surprised when they started going out. I thought since their relationship hasn’t advance into lovers, A-chan should stand a chance. At least that was what I thought initially.”

“Then, there shouldn’t be a problem, right? Natsukawa-san and him—”

Right before it slipped out, Ai instantly stopped herself.

As long as Eita and Masuzu don’t announce it, their breakup should be treated as a secret.

“You really have a strong sense of duty[1].

Speak of the devil, Natsukawa Masuzu appears.

She walked towards them, coming from class 1, and despite her sudden appearance, Kaoru didn’t seem surprised.

Ai instinctively knew what was going on.

She was invited here by the two of them.

“I really respect this side of Fuyuumi-san, and I’m grateful for that. And because of that, I can only become your enemy.”

“What are you talking about now.”

Fuyuumi stared at Masuzu.

“You don’t understand how unhappy I am with the presence of you as a girlfriend.”

“No, I understand.”

Masuzu said with a melancholic voice.

“The winner was decided before the battle, I’m the same as you on this basis.”

Ai doesn’t understand what she is talking about.

“I heard about the breakup from Natsukawa-san.”

Kaoru, who kept his silence up till now, spoke up.

“Also, I heard about why Eita is working hard. Although I kind of guessed it; when I actually heard it in person, it was overwhelming.”

“What are you talking about, I don’t understand!”

The slow pace of the conversation is annoying Ai.

On the other hand, Masuzu was calm, and Ai didn’t like that.

“He’s working hard because he wants to be a doctor.”

“Is that so? As expected of Takkun, aren’t doctors great?”

“The reason he wants to be a doctor—is to cure Harusaki-san’s body.”

A small wave crashed in Ai’s heart.

“Chiwa’s body? What’s wrong with her?”

“I heard she got heavily injured during last summer due to a car accident. Although it doesn’t affect her daily life, she can’t continue her passion, kendo. In order to let her pick up kendo again, he decided to become a doctor.”

“……”

That means, the reason Eita is studying so hard is for Chiwa?

“Bu—but!”

Ai used the strength from the bottom of her abdomen and replied.

“Takkun himself said he’s anti-love. He said he hates love, and he can’t like girls! So, even if it’s Chiwa, he doesn’t like her, right?”

Masuzu looked impressed.

“He even told you that?”

“Yes! That’s why, I will help Takkun with his distaste towards love.”

“That’s a rather huge project.”

Masuzu answered fiercely.

“The only person who can do this is Harusaki-san. You and I, we can’t do anything.”

“How can you be so sure?”

“Because their bond is stronger than anyone else’s bond.”

The bell rang at this moment.

It’s time for the morning assembly.

“I have said what I’ve wanted to say.”

Ai yelled at the leaving Masuzu’s back.

“Wa—wait up!”

Ai wanted to take out her “marriage registration” and show it to Masuzu.

But when her fingers touched the paper in her pocket, her hand froze.

“? What?”

“……No-nothing.”

“Is that so?”, Masuzu said as she left.

Ai stared at her silver hair, and gripped her skirt tightly.

Why is it that she can’t show it to her?

Deep down, she already knew the answer.

If she shows it to her, and it gets brushed aside—

If she says “So what?” or something along those lines—

If she asked “Is that stronger than the bond of Harusaki Chiwa?”—

“That’s fine, A-chan.”

Kaoru’s voice was really kind.

“Memories are memories, no matter how it is now, memories won’t discolour, so it’s better to keep your memories to yourself, don’t let others see them.”

Ai wanted to rebuke, but she couldn’t do it.

She couldn’t do it……

♦

While she was still feeling down, the second semester ended and winter holidays came.

Winter prep school starts on Christmas day.

It should be a happy thing to have Eita all to herself, but she doesn’t feel happy at all.

In the same classroom, sitting next to each other, without anyone to disturb them, it is the perfect chance for love.

—this isn’t good!

In the morning of the first day of class, Ai refreshed herself before her mirror.

There’s only attack in love. If his heart leans towards Chiwa, she’ll need to attack until he turns back.

Ai entered the classroom one hour before the class starts. Just a little is enough, a little more time to talk with him.

She thought she was the earliest, but there was already a boy studying in the classroom.

It’s Eita.

“Hey, A-chan, you’re pretty early.”

He raised his hand and flashed a smile, making Ai slightly dizzy.

He’s here so early, and studying so hard.

He’s really really cool. I like you. I like you.

“You, I really like you------!”

“So noisy even in the morning!?”

Ah, that’s not right.

Once she gets excited she will start making weird noises, that’s a bad habit of hers.

I just can’t give him over to Chiwa.

Ai stole a glance at the side of his studying face while checking the contents of her back.

The Christmas present is ready.

“Hey, Takkun.”

“Sorry, give me one moment.”

He took out his phone and stared at the screen. He seemed to have received a message.

“Pff!”

He chuckled while looking at the screen.

What is that? Some interesting text? Or is it a picture?

She feels uneasy.

Who is the sender?

He started typing the reply quickly.

—Hey, whose message was that?

It’s just a simple question, but she can’t make herself ask it today.

If she sent him a message, the fastest she gets a response is in ten minutes, waiting for over an hour is not a rare thing.

She herself……never got a reply……so fast……

“Hey, look.”

After replying, he turned the screen towards her.

White turkey stew, and a large Christmas cake.

A picture of gorgeous food decorated with candles.

This was Chiwa’s dinner yesterday. They are a three man family, you know? And she ate over half of this herself.”

“Heh, hehh, that sounds like something Chiwa would do.

She knows her smile is stiff.

Fuyuumi was desperate, she needs to start a conversation. If this goes on, it will all be about Chiwa, and she doesn’t want that. It’s rare for them to be together alone. Something, something that provides a chance to give him the Christmas present.

“Er—erm! I heard of this by chance!”

“Hmm?”

“Takkun, your goal is the medical department right?”

The instant she finished, Ai regretted it.

Why, did she choose this topic specifically? There should be a limit to not knowing how to talk.

“Oh, you are quite informed.”

She thought he would ask her where she heard it from, but he was unexpectedly honest.

“You know Jinzuu University, right?”

“Of course,” Ai nodded, that’s the name of the public university in the neighbor district.

“Their medical department has a recommendation system. Hane-kou seems to have a recommendation too.”

“Ah, I’ve heard about that, the one with the scholarship, right?”

A third year senior in the disciplinary committee was said to be aiming for that too. However, her results were not good enough for the minimum requirement, and she gave up on the recommendation during the first semester.

The third year was single digit in her ranking throughout all the exams, and had good records in her co-curriculum activities too.

“That’s quite a hard goal.”

“I know right.”

He nodded while flipping the textbook, but he looked happy.

“But but, Takkun can choose any other school, right? Like a university in Tokyo or something like that.”

“Because it costs quite a bit, lodging will be a problem.”

“If that’s the case, how about the law department in Jinzuu University? It’s well known for it. My mom’s mentor is still there, and prosecutors or lawyers are quite respectable careers too!”

When she came to her senses, she realized he was staring at her.

Ai finally noticed that she was yelling again, and her face turned bright red.

“But, my ambition is to become a doctor.”

“……mm.”

I know.

When I heard Natsukawa Masuzu’s speech, I already knew.

Because I know your kindness the best.

“A-chan, did you decide on what you want to do? Is it a lawyer?”

“……prosecutor……”

“That suits you well, it’s perfect.”

Even with the praises, she’s not happy.

She didn’t want to talk about this topic in the first place.

Why did it turn out this way?

Today is Christmas too.

You know my feelings too.

Can’t you take a hint?

Because you’re anti-love, it doesn’t matter how your Christmas is?

“Eh? Where are you going?”

Ai left her seat, he stared at her, puzzled.

“Outside. For a run.”

“The class is starting soon, you know?”

“Takkun you idiotttttt! I’m going outside for a runnnnnnnnnnnnnnnn!”

Ai ran outside, opposed to the few students walking into the classroom. Although bewildered stares pierced her from different angles, she couldn’t care less.

Just like this, Ai retreated in tears during Christmas.

Everything went according to Masuzu’s plans.

Translator notes and references

- In this case, the “sense of duty” refers to an attitude of “bros before hoes”.

#12: Masuzu’s Feast

#12 真涼の宴

At the evening of Christmas day.

Ending the lovestruck brain hunt, I, Natsukawa Masuzu, was on the way back home.

What is lovestruck brain hunt? It is handing out punishment to lovers who publicly display their affection for each other according to social justice.

Because it’s Christmas today, prey are everywhere. Thanks to that, the hunt went very well. I yelled “I-diot!” at their connected hands and hand chopped them then ran away, or shouted “how lewd—!” at a couple sitting on a bench and ran away. The hunt was successful.

“A—achoo!”

I sneezed, and wiped my nose with a piece of tissue.

Because I was walking around outside the entire day, I was freezing, and I wanted to hurry up and warm myself up in my room.

En route home, I passed by lovers and people bringing their family along quite a few times.

Since I already made fun of lovers quite a bit today, I am not angry, but people walking with their families make me upset.

The happy atmosphere of a family being together, it makes me sad.

—Harusaki-san’s family, will they go out to dinner like this too?

I imagined that scene.

Because of that, I hate the act of eating.

Eating is just to attain nutrition, nothing more, nothing less. Eating cake or chicken just because of Christmas, eating food that harms the body during a day of celebration, this is not logical.

That’s why, I will eat Weider in Jelly[1] (room temperature) tonight too.

As I reached the entrance of the apartment.

“Hi, you sure are late.”

Kidou Eita stood there with a dumb look on his face, holding a bag.

“A—ara[2]”

My feelings almost appeared on my face, I pinched my butt and held it in.

“What are you doing in front of another person’s house? Are you a stalker?”

“Don’t say things that don’t sound nice when spread.”

“Well, I don’t remember telling you my house address.”

“You were absent for a day in our first semester right? I got it from the homeroom teacher then.”

That homeroom teacher is really nosy, this is why I say you can’t trust females.

“Tonight, I brought a gift[3] for you.”

Eita handed over the bag.

Just with that move, my heart started throbbing wildly, how reproachable.

“What do you mean by that? Is this some kind of Christmas gift or something like that?”

“Huh, why should I give you something like that, this is food.”

“Don’t tell me it’s cake or chicken?”

This man would think of something like that?

“Nope, it’s pork miso soup.”

He said it flatly, with an annoying triumphant look on his face.

“Po—pork?”

“I added ginger to give it more flavour. It will warm you up.”

“Ah……”

My limbs gave out.

This man is really anti-love down to his bones, he’s similar to me.

“What’s wrong? You don’t think that I would bring chicken or cake happily here on Christmas, right? Compared to things that harm your body like those, pork miso soup with a lot of vegetables would definitely be better!”

I seem to have heard those words somewhere before.

“If it has nothing to do with Christmas, why did you bring it?”

“This is a show of gratitude that I didn’t have the chance to convey.”

“Gratitude?”

What is this about, I don’t even know.

“Actually, I met your father.”

“……is that so?”

Although it isn’t pleasant to hear, I have sort of predicted it.

After all, my situations are all leaked to my father. It’s not unthinkable of him to arrange a meeting with him.

“You asked your father to let you stay here before you graduate right?”

“That’s nothing, I just didn’t want to deal with all the petty things that come with transferring schools.”

“Even if that’s the case, I’m happy. You chose to be together with us right?”

He said that and smiled.

……what should I do.

I’m close to tears.

“That goes without question right? I’m the one who founded the maiden club you know.”

So, I smiled.

Smiling when I’m close to tears.

I’ll let you see me cry when I feel like smiling.

Only by doing that, I can live on. That would probably be the case from now on too.

Continuing to lie, no matter what.

“Masuzu.”

I even forced a smile for him to see, but he looked really sad.

“Honestly, I don’t know what you’re thinking about, but—”

He placed his hand on my shoulder with force.

“When you need my help, I can always lend you a hand. I’m your ex-boyfriend after all, I still have this bit of reliability.”

—can’t. I, can’t.

I took the bag from his hands, and turned my back towards him.

“Well well, that’s quite dependable of you.”

In order for you to not see my teary but happy face, I spoke with a clear voice.

“However, please save your reliability for Harusaki-san. How is it going? Has there been any progress this Christmas?”

“No? Totally nothing.”

“If you have the time to bring pork miso soup to me, why not give her a gift.”

“Leave it. We will do things our way.”

His firm words sounded stronger than usual.

I knew it instinctively.

Most likely, something good happened between the two of them.

♦

After parting with him, I went back to my own room in the apartment.

Placing the bag he gave me on the dining table—I dived into my bed.

Natsukawa Masuzu’s feast starts now!

“Haaaaa---------nn---------Eitaaaaa-----!!”

Nobody will hear anything here.

“Eita, Eita, Eita, Eita, Eita, Eita, Eita, Eita, Eita, Eita, Eita, Eitaaaan!”

So I can shout his name all I want.

I hugged my pillow tightly, and rolled around on my bed, shouting.

In the end, I rolled too hard and fell to the ground, hitting my face hard.

It’s painful.

No, it isn’t painful.

I just need to regurgitate the lines he said before—

“‘When you need my help, I can always lend you a hand.’”

Kuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuunn!

Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaahn!

“Why didn’t I record it, idiot! Idiot! Idiot!”

I could’ve activated the recording function in my pocket without him realizing.

There’s definitely a way I could’ve done it.

As long as I have that voice, I can fight through the rest of my high school life with a full stomach!

If I don’t save it this way, I can’t continue the fight.

Because, his hand will never hug me again.

Even if it’s just a fake.

Never again.

“Ah, aah. Aaah, aaaaaaaaaaah!”

How painful.

How painful, my chest is in pain.

This won’t do, I shouldn’t think about 'reality’things I hate.

I need to escape this. I need to chase reality out of here.

I stood up, and took out a white bag from the drawer of my desk.

This is the “Eita bag”.

During the second semester, I was collecting his belongings without him knowing and keeping it in this bag.

First up is this, an eraser.

I got the eraser that has become really small, so small you can’t use it any more.

I placed the eraser against my cheek softly.

Closing my eyes, imagining his fingertips.

“Monyo, monyo, monyo, monyo, monyo.”

Mmm, it’s too small to do it with.

Next up is this. A pencil.

The area of the pencil in contact with my face is larger than the eraser, and the best thing is, this is the tool that enables him to work hard every day, it’s an indispensable gem.

“Monyo, monyo, monyo. Ouch, monyo, ouch, monyo.”

Getting stabbed by the sharp end is dangerous.

Using this to monyo might be impossible.

There’s no other choice, let’s use the final weapon.

“Jajan~[4]”

Indoor shoes!

I even have such a thing.

Although I felt sorry when I took away his shoes from his shoe rack, I did replace it with a brand new substitution. I hope he forgives me. Eita did wear the new shoes too. By the way, I hugged those pair of new shoes while sleeping every night. This is what they call killing two birds with one stone.

My face rubbed across the dirty, worn out indoor shoes.

Although the dirt on the sole stuck on my face, I didn’t mind it.

Because this pair of indoor shoes is adorned with his high school life.

“Monyo, monyo, monyo, monyo……”

Ah, how satisfying.

I prepared the pork miso soup he prepared for me afterwards too.

What a great Christmas—

“……!”

I shook my head, chasing away the evil thoughts.

What am I doing!

I was thanking Christmas, this is an idiotic action that an anti-love shouldn’t have!

To calm my head down, I opened the window and went out to the balcony.

I rubbed my frozen hands, and looked at the entrance of the apartment.

There’s no sign of him anymore.

He should be back in his house, where Harusaki-san is waiting for him.

That’s good.

That’s good enough.

“I’ll definitely, make Eita happy—”

This is the biggest gift I can give him.

Take it, Eita.

Translator notes and references

- Taken mainly to replenish energy. Not suggested to be eaten as dinner.
- No specific English expression can correctly convey all the feelings Masuzu has in this very word, so I just kept it this way.
- A gift for thanks/gratitude, usually for hardwork.
- The “epic reveal” sound effect.

#13: Please Give me Love

#13 愛をください

After leaving Masuzu’s house, I went to Fuyuumi’s apartment.

After ringing the doorbell, her younger brother Yuuki-kun answered the door.

“Eh? Isn’t this ‘Takkun’-san? Why are you here at this hour?”

I heaved a sigh of relief, as I was worried that the one answering might be her father, and it made me nervous.

Also, since I already met Yuuki-kun once, it’s easier to talk with him.

“Is your sister not back yet?”

“Nope, don’t you go to the same extra class as her?”

“Um, well, that’s not wrong……”

I can’t just tell him she ran out before class started, it would make him worried.

“She hasn’t reply to my mails or answer my calls, so I decided to come over and check.”

I got her address from Kaoru. He seemed to be worried too, and went to search for her.

“I understand. If she returns, I’ll ask her to contact you immediately.”

“Thanks.”

As usual, he is a reliable younger brother; he doesn’t act like a fifth grader at all.

“This is her bag, she left it in class.”

“Thank you for going out of your way to bring it here.”

After Yuuki-kun took the bag, he stared at me with a serious face.

“Takkun-san, I’ll leave my sister in your care.”

“Eh?”

“Because my sister is obsessed with you, to a point where I am embarrassed just by looking at her.”

“……i—is it that serious?”

Yuuki-kun nodded.

“Every night, violent breathing or screaming can be heard from her room. Something like ‘Takkun, no admittance~’ or ‘Takkun is faking politeness[1]~’”

“What’s with that.”

What role am I playing happily in her mind?

“She is so obsessed with you that she might just die if you dump her, so please treat her with care.”

“……o-oh.”

After leaving Fuyuumi’s house, I decided to go back to the prep school.

If Fuyuumi realizes she forgot her bag, she might return to the prep school, since the self study classroom is still open, the possibility is there.

After listening to what Yuuki-kun said, I can’t help but start worrying.

Although I don’t know what the cause was, Fuyuumi was not her normal self this morning.

Although it is normal for her temper to turn into chariots of fire[2], the key part is what happened before that.

Who did she hear it from? She found out I was aiming for the medical department.

I have a bad premonition…..

En route back to the prep school, I saw a familiar silhouette on the pedestrian bridge.

It’s Fuyuumi.

Even from a long distance, it is obvious that her face was lacking in vitality under the streetlight.

She was leaning on the handrail, looking at the cars passing by under her on the prefectural road.

“Hey, A-chan!”

I shouted with all my might, but she didn’t respond. My voice was drowned by the cars.

—that girl, is she going to!

I ran over to the bridge.

“A-chan! Don’t be rash! A-chan!”

I yelled her name and ran up the stairs two steps at a time.

I ran to her side, panting.

“What are you thinking! Tell me, what can you do if you die?”

Once I shouted, A-chan turned her head slowly.

“Takkun? Why are you here?”

“Be-because, I saw you here, anyway, don’t be too rash!”

A-chan stared blankly for a second, and smiled weakly at me soon after.

“Don’t misunderstand, I’m not thinking of jumping down.”

“Wh—what…..”

Is that so. Did I misjudge it from being nervous?

I felt worn out, so I crouched down on the spot.

“Are you worried about me?

“Of course I am!”

“You’re in love with Chiwa, but you still worry for other girls?”

I raised my head and stared at A-chan.

“Why are you bringing up Chiwa?”

“The girl most important to Takkun is Chiwa right? If that’s the case, why are you so kind to me?”

“Stop your twisted theories.”

This type of thinking that ranks certain relationship over others feels like the thoughts a lovestruck brain would have. I don’t like it.

“But that’s the truth, right? Compared to a promise ten years ago, a bond formed over nine years is more important, right?”

“That’s enough, calm down.”

“Tell me clearly! Fulfilling your promise with Chiwa is the most important right? More important than the marriage agreement with me, right? Right?”

“……yeah.”

“I knew it.”

Tears started flowing out of A-chan’s eyes.

“If that’s the case, hey, Takkun. If I didn’t move, would you have fallen for me? If I have always stayed near you, would you have fallen for me? If I practiced kendo? If I liked to eat meat? Is it fine if I am very short? Or is it the hairstyle? Face? Voice? Hey—”

“Stop saying stupid things!”

A-chan’s face froze out of surprise and fear.

I only realized I shouted afterwards.

“Sto-stop saying such stupid stuff; you are you, okay? You are not Chiwa. You are a disciplinary committee member, second place in our year, good at

cooking; aren’t you great yourself? Don’t belittle yourself just for love!”

“It’s not ‘just’!”

A-chan said while sobbing.

“Why can’t you understand? I could die for Takkun. I would do anything just to make you like me more than Chiwa. I know this is the worst, but I’m stupid. Although i’m a disciplinary committee member, I am stupid. I’m just a stupid and foolish girl who wants Takkun’s love! I want Takkun’s love! I want Takkun to like me! So I worked hard, and gave my all; even when a girlfriend appeared, I didn’t lose! Why is it still impossible? Was the winner already decided before our re-encounter? This is just too unfair, way too unfair. You want to become a doctor and cure Chiwa’s body, who can come between such a beautiful dream? If someone wanted to, won’t she be perceived as a bad person? Unfair, this is just unfair, unfair……”

Her voice turned hoarse at the end from crying; I couldn’t hear what she was saying.

I didn’t know what to do, so I just stood there.

“How did it turn out like this?”

I just wanted to help Chiwa, as simple as that.

But why did I make A-chan cry?

Does that mean, if I help Chiwa, I can’t save A-chan?

If that’s the case, what should I do?

“Ara ara, Eita, you made a girl cry. Way to go!”

A voice came from behind me.

I turned and saw someone I totally wasn’t expecting standing there.

“Long time no see, how have you been~?”

She waved her hand.

She was as carefree as usual. Wearing makeup even though she’s already 40, it makes me embarrassed.

“Why, are you here—”

Even I myself knew that my voice was trembling.

I thought I wouldn't ever meet her again, and it's not like I ever wanted to meet her either

You still have the guts to appear in front of me in such a frivolous manner?

“Because, I’m already tired of that man, ya know~? I have no money either, and nowhere I can live.”

Kidou Mihoshi.

My mother who disappeared one year ago.

“So—that’s—what happened, let us live together again, my son♪”

“Pachi Lemon” December Edition•Merry Christmas Special

A must do even during Christmas night ♥ Popucute test!

Penname “Ultra beautiful girl[3]”-san’s Answers

Q1: What is the true form of Santa?

A1: Money probably, money

Q2: White Christmas! How would you have fun in the snow with him?

A2: It’s too cold no thanks

Q3: What do you want to give him as a present?

A3: A voucher to serve me for a day.

Q4: What do you wish to get from him?

A4: I can buy the things I want myself, so there’s no need, right?

Q5: What is Christmas to you truthfully?

A5: The day where the amount of small fries who fawn over me triple.

Your Christmas is: straying too far from the thread[4]!

Pachi Lemon Editorial Board: How sad~maybe if you fall in love things

will change

Translator notes and references

- 慇懃無礼, meaning to be polite on the surface but different underneath.
- The 1981 British film about two runners.
- 超絶美少女
- As in a discussion thread.

Extra: Mana’s Bright Red Bicycle

書き下ろし短編

真那の真っ赤な自転車

「パチレモン」12月号・メリークリスマス特別付録

聖夜もやるゾ♥モテカワ度テスト！

ペンネーム「超絶美少女」さんの回答

Q1：サンタの正体ってなんだろうね？

A1：カネでしょ、カネ

Q2：ホワイトクリスマス！彼とどんな雪遊びを？

A2：寒いからヤダ

Q3：彼にあげたいプレゼントは？

A3：アタシに一日奉仕する券

Q4：彼からもらいたいプレゼントは？

A4：欲しいものは買うからいらなくね？

Q5：ずばり、あなたにとってクリスマスとは？

A5：ザコが三割増しでアタシに媚を売る日。

あなたのクリスマスは：スレすぎ！

パチレモン編集部より：悲しいな〜。恋をしたら変われるかも

Being Natsukawa Mana is quite hard.

Well, I think this is something most people wouldn’t understand.

My family runs a huge company known as the Natsukawa Group.

As to how big its size is, if you randomly enter a convenience store or restaurant, it is most likely related to our company. Although that’s the case, I’m not very proud of the whole “I’m the daughter of the Natsukawas—!” thing. In fact, I don’t know if the staff are considered members of the Natsukawa Group. This is a capitalist society after all.

I study at the middle school division of the Nenaka Girls’ Institution. It is what they call a rich girls’ school.

This school has an escalator system[1].

Or is it known as the conveyor belt system?

It’s like heavily packaging the family’s daughter and displaying it to society afterwards.

To be honest, it’s boring.

I have no conversation partners in school. 70% of classmates who barely touch the upper echelon of society fawn over me just because of the name “Natsukawa”, and the other 30% are just afraid of approaching me.

Taking Akishino Himeka as an example—there is nobody who would approach me by their own accord like Hime would.

Although I said that, for me to be together with peasants now is just, you know.

It’s hard to talk on the same level if the living standards are different. A distance will form from the perceived difference in worlds, either that or the presence of prejudice or envy.

Regarding this, Hime is the daughter of a long standing hotel, with a higher

social status, so she is easier to talk with.

It’s healing.

I love it.

……well, it’s not like I rely on it that much!

“Phew……”

Ten o’ clock at night.

I faced the desk in my room and sighed.

The long summer vacation comes to an end, tomorrow is the start of the new semester. Although my assignments are done (almost all of them are done by the home tutor), I have a bigger “problem” in front of me.

Career survey (final).

As soon as I hand this in, my path is mostly set.

If I decide to advance directly in school, it’s pretty much decided that I will study in the high school division of Nenaka Girls’ Institution.

If I want to enter a high school outside of my institute’s department, I need to state its name here too.

I wrote “Prefectural Hanenoyama High School” here.

Because this is where Hime is studying.

If my homeroom old lady sees this, she might just faint with white foam coming out of her mouth. Maybe she will kneel in front of my father and apologize, “You place your precious daughter in our hands, we are really sorry it turned out this way!”

If it’s some other high level private high school it might just be fine, but there should be no students with a prefectural school as their choice. It’s unavoidable to surprise others, making them go “what happened!?”

However, it’s not like mama and papa will say anything.

Mom is quite easy going with me, and we are not staying together at the moment either. She is probably having fun in the area around Florence or Rome. She only phones me occasionally.

Dad has had no interest in me from the start.

The only person he’s interested in is Suzu—my sister of the same father, Masuzu.

So, whichever school I want to attend is my choice, I can go wherever I want.

But still.

“Is this fine? Me?”

Sometimes I ask myself this.

Isn’t career survey something more important than this?

Nevertheless, my aim is to enter the same school as Hime.

However, this feels like “I’ve no friends here, so I have to go to a prefectural school”.

If I value my pride, this is something I can’t allow to happen……

That’s why, I have yet to talk about this with Hime.

What if Hime stares at me with her innocent eyes and says, “Does Mana really not have other friends?”

I don’t want that—it would be like I lost. Maybe I won’t recover from that.

I don’t feel comfortable about this situation.

It would be better if I have a goal or a dream, but I have both money and power; I can get almost anything I want.

Although I know this is a luxurious worry.

It still doesn’t change the fact that I am worried about something.

♦

While I was still unhappy, the second semester came.’

Even I, while living a boring life constantly surrounded by rich girls, have a small ambition.

That is—learning how to ride a bike!

Although I usually go to school by car, but ever since I came to Japan, I have been longing to ride a bike to school. Because, isn’t it cool to run against the “Shoosh, shoosh” wind in the morning? Besides, it’s not even rare to arrive by limousine in my school—machines need to be controlled by our own hands after all!

Although it’s great to have bought a custom made bright red bike from the manufacturer, no matter how many times I tried, I couldn’t achieve balance and repeatedly fell off the bike.

I never thought this would be something I couldn’t ride if I didn’t practice……

No license required, and even brats could easily ride it. I thought it was something anybody could easily ride, but it’s actually a form of transportation that only chosen people can control.

And, well, that’s the case.

After school on a random day.

I took my beloved bike Celine-chan to a nearby parkland.

The perimeter of this place is a bicycle path; I started practicing here a month ago.

The north side of the park is the entrance, bustling with people, but since the

southern part is mostly forest, there aren't many people there. It's an excellent place that not many people know about.

After all, I'm so cute, no matter where I am, I will in—stantly attract all the attention.

Even now, just by walking, people are already staring at me. The old man just now was even widening his eyes th—is much staring at me! Kufufu, sigh—even such a withering old man is seduced by me, do I have the charm of an adult now? Being beautiful is a sin!

I ignored the stares and reached the usual spot.

My form has been quite well recently. I can ride from this tree to that tree and not fall for about ten meters. To have this result in a month, I'm quite good, right?

My resolution today is to ride from that tree to another tree. Let's go?

I sat on the saddle enthusiastically, and stepped on the pedal—

"Excuse me, do you have a second to spare?"

A voice called out to me, and I stopped my leg from stepping down.

I turned and saw someone standing there.

I couldn't identify the sex at first glance.

The person had white skin, slim and beautiful, wearing pants, and had a very gender neutral voice. It's hard to identify the sex. The person's age should be about mine, or maybe a year older than me.

"What? Why are you staring at my chest?"

"No, no-nothing!"

No matter how I see it, there isn't a bulge on the chest area. If it isn't a girl

with an extremely flat chest, it has got to be a guy.

If that’s the case, there’s only one way to deal with him.

“I’m sorry, I’m busy at the moment, so I can’t play with you.”

I smiled slightly at him, but refusing him completely with words. I can’t let him have any lingering hopes.

This is the secret to turning down someone’s approach.

He looked as if he’s troubled—

“No, erm, I won’t take too much of your time, it will be done instantly.”

Ah. He’s so persistent despite being hot. This must be because I’m too cute.

“It’s hard to say it, but, your backpack—”

“Ah this? It’s a limited edition Gucci, it’s not sold in Japan.”

“Mm, it’s that Gucci.”

He pointed at my butt on the saddle and said.

“Your skirt is stuck between your backpack and your back, it’s already half exposed.”

“……..yes?”

I instantly reached my hand to the back and touched my butt.

The piece of fabric that should be there wasn’t in its designated place.

It felt like I was directly touching my underwear.

“Ngyaaaaaaaaaaa!!”

“Ah, please wait?”

I stepped on the pedals with all my strength.

I just wanted to leave this place as fast as possible on my bike.

But at that moment, Celine-chan was feeling cranky.

I didn’t even ride for three seconds before I wobbled and lost balance.

—pittan[2]!

“Goddammit…”

Although it makes me irritated to hear a sympathetic voice, the pain of falling is worse than that.

Wh-why are you staring like that?

“Erm, it’s not just half now, it’s fully exposed.”

“Enough of that, help me you jerk!”

♦

I’m not in the mood for practice today, thanks to the hot guy.

“Is it my fault?”

“Of—course, causing me to fall is a heavy offence.”

I parked Celine-chan beside me and sat down on the park bench, drinking juice.

Of course it was the hot guy’s treat.

“To be able to have a drink with me is a platinum ticket, you should thank me.”

“What unbelievable confidence, as expected of a foreigner.”

He’s actually admiring me instead of focusing on the topic.

“Anyway, I am sorry, I’m Asoi Kaoru.

“Hmph, not only your face, even your name sounds like a girl’s name.”

Kaoru didn’t look angry and replied with a smile.

“I get that a lot.”

I don’t like his composure.

There’s a super beautiful girl right beside you, at least show some nervousness.

“What’s your name?”

“I’m Mana Kleinsmith.”

I used my mother’s family name.

After showing such an embarrassing side, I can’t use the name Natsukawa.

“Mana, what were you doing here just now?”

“Wait a moment, you’re calling me by my first name straight away?”

“Because ‘Kleinsmith-san’ is hard to pronounce?”

“……”

This guy is cheeky as expected.

“Give me a moment, I’ll practice how to control my beloved car.”

“Ah, so you can’t ride a bike.”

“I, I can ride a bike! I can go five meters without my feet touching the ground!”

“Isn’t that the same as not being able to ride a bike?”

After saying it with a carefree attitude, Kaoru finished his juice.

“If that’s the case, why don’t you try using training wheels?”

“Training wheels[3]?”

What’s that? Such a cute name.

“It’s a tool that will prevent the bike from falling down, you can’t even fall if you try to.”

“Whe—where can I get something like that?”

So there is such a godly item, it fits me perfectly!

“It is sold in bicycle shops; I can take you to one if you want.”

“Take me take me! Please!”

I let Kaoru lead the way and brought Celine-chan to the bicycle shop near the park.

The shop owner said “This is my first time installing on a Celine[4]” happily while putting on the practice wheels on both sides.

I tried riding it immediately in front of the shop—how surprising!

“Ahahahahaha! What amazing sta—bili—ty!”

I don’t even need to worry about falling!

Although the downside is the “Gashagasha” noise it makes, the balance it provides trumps the flaw; it’s hard to fall this way.

“Look here look here Kaoru! Every—one is looking at me!”

“That’s great.”

Kaoru nodded while watching me ride a few laps in front of the shop.

“This should be a good enough apology for making you fall, right?”

“Ahahaha, looks like I have no choice but to forgive you!”

The next morning.

After installing the practice wheels, I fulfilled my wish of riding a bike to school. But, waiting for me were the unseen before shocked expressions of my classmates and a whirlpool of laughs from other people.

♦

After school, I took a Celine-chan without training wheels to the park.

“I, I I I, I will kill you! I’ll definitely kill you!”

“Well well, calm down.”

I started ranting at Kaoru, who was sitting on the same bench as yesterday.

“How can I calm down!? This is the first time in my life getting laughed at by people this way! My skirt was flipped! I got laughed at for using training wheels! Ever since yesterday, I went through a hundred times the humiliation that I’ve ever felt before!”

“I’m not the one who flipped your skirt……”

Kaoru shrugged—

“I don’t think training wheels are weird.”

“Even if you don’t think that way, everyone else thinks they are!”

“But, Mana, you don’t think they’re weird, right? Weren’t you really happy yesterday?”

“Tha—that’s……because, I am not familiar with how things work in Japan.”

Actually, I still don’t understand why I was laughed at for using training wheels.

“Compared to falling and hurting yourself, I think getting ridiculed is much better.”

“NO[5], I would rather get injured than be laughed at!”

I spoke without hesitation.

Compared to getting picked on by those high class female brats, a few scrapes on the knee aren’t much.

Kaoru stood up, lowered his head and apologized to me.

“It’s my fault, I underestimated Mana’s pride.”

“I-it’s good if you understand.”

What’s with that, suddenly becoming so gentle.

“I’ll take responsible for that by helping you learn how to ride a bike.”

“Really?”

That made me slightly happy.

To be honest, I have no idea what to do on my own.

“Because there’s no theory on how to ride a bike, it should be faster to learn if you experience how it feels once.”

“I see, but how should we accomplish that?”

“How about me riding, and you sitting behind?”

Kaoru smiled.

What a refreshing smile. If it was a simple girl, she would be easily captivated. But this move won’t work on me.

“But, Celine-chan doesn’t have a backseat.

“No problem, I rode my bike here today.”

I looked at the tree, and saw an old city bike parked under the shade. He made quite the preparation.

“Haha-n. So that’s how it is.”

“Eh?”

“Your plot is to make me sit behind and hug you right? You’re a boy after all.”

For some reason, Kaoru tilted his head and replied.

“Am I really a boy? Is this the real me?”

“Huh? You mean you’re actually a girl?”

Come to think of it, his face is actually quite suitable for a girl’s too.”

“No no, that’s not what I meant.”

Kaoru smiled bitterly.

“Anyway, just get on, you don’t have to hug me.”

Kaoru sat on the saddle while I sat horizontally on the backseat.

The city bike slowly started moving.

“What are you doing? Go faster.”

“It is slightly dangerous though?”

“Just fly ahead! I can’t grasp the feel when it’s this slow.”

“Then, excuse me.” Kaoru said that and started to get serious.

“Kyaa—♪this is faster than Celine-chan—♪”

The bike went faster and faster; wind brushed against my cheeks as the scenery flew past me.

“Fast, fast this is fast! …..but isn’t this a little bit too fast?

The backseat started clattering and shaking; my butt hurts.

I held my skirt down to not let it get blown up by the wind.

“Wai—too fast too fast! This is too fast Kaoru!”

“Eh? What? I can’t hear you.”

“I—sa—id—too—fast, kyaaaaaaaa!”

I couldn’t hold on any longer and hugged Kaoru’s waist tightly.

This guy is really slim, his waist is probably smaller than mine. I thought this while hugging him with both of my arms to not fall off the bike.

Of course, I didn’t have any remaining room to hold down my skirt.

“NOOOOOOOOOOOO IT’S FULLY EXPOSED AGAINNNNNNNNNN!”

We rode like this throughout the entire cycling road.

During the ride, I was pointed and laughed at by a group of elementary school students.

The salarymen lying on the grass stared at me.

The group of housewives holding shopping bags frowned at me.

That old man’s eyes widened once more. Why are you here again?

……damn.

I can’t get married anymore.

♦

“Was that on purpose? You did that on purpose right? You wanted to embarrass me right?”

“That wasn’t my intention.”

Kaoru sat on the bench and replied after taking a deep breath.

“It’s Mana who told me to ride faster right?”

“There should be a limit to that too! Even if I said to fly ahead, it should be at a speed that won’t flip my skirt up. You should at least care a bit more about me, how inconsiderate!”

“Girls are rather troublesome.”

Mmm—what’s with this guy, is he thinking highly of himself just because he’s hot?

“So, how do you feel? Can you grasp the feel?”

“I don’t know. I was hugging you with my dear life.”

The moment I said that, I instantly felt embarrassed.

I was hugging Kaoru with all my strength…..

“Then, how about you try it yourself?”

Kaoru was oblivious to my feelings and replied with a smile.

“Your hard work and embarrassment won’t be in vain. I have seen how hard you’re working.”

“Hmph, flattering me won’t help, you pretentious man.”

I decided to try riding.

I stepped on the pedal and started to ride slowly.

Although it is faster now, the balance is not there. Since the front wheel was shaking and I couldn’t go fast, I fell into the spiral of not being able to balance it, and in the end—

“It’s not working—!”

After falling down, I sat on the ground and yelled.

Kaoru scratched his head.

“As I expected, just by sitting behind, you couldn’t grasp the feeling.”

“Y-you……”

I don’t like this guy! I hate this guy!

“If that’s the case, you’ll accompany me every day until I learn how to ride a bike! Every day!”

“Erm, even if you say that, it will be hard to accompany you every day.”

“Stop joking around, do you know how many times you’ve made me fall? You have to take responsibility, you’re a man, right?”

“Man, huh……”

For some reason, Kaoru showed a complicated face and murmured.

“Well, if you put it that way I have no other choice. Although I can’t do anything great, I’ll accompany you for now.”

“Hmph, of course!”

And so, the scrape on my knee got me a slave in return.

I'll use him to his limits, and throw him away when he's useless.

♦

I visit Hime's house every Sunday.

The trigger to it is the "doujinshi[6]" I was forced to buy during the summer holidays. I went to her house to borrow the source manga, and from then onwards I started going to her house every Sunday for some reason.

"And then and then, that guy was totally head over heels for me—"

"That's some good luck."

Hime answered while moving her pen fluidly across her notebook.

Hime has been practicing drawing manga. She should be done with panel layouts now, and is using the script I wrote as a material, drawing over and over again.

Sitting beside her, I wasn't fooling around either. I was busy reading Hime's collection of books.

Actually, we are currently working on our plan of creating a doujinshi. The reason I was reading this hard was to find a title to work on.

"He said he is helping me learn how to ride a bike, but his intention to get closer to me is quite obvious. Well, if I turn down his offer, it's like I'm too inflexible, right? Being popular is quite troublesome—"

"That's excellent."

Hime's pen hand wouldn't stop drawing.

"Hey~are you listening?"

Since she wouldn't turn around and face me, I was a bit lonely, and I nudged her in the ribs.

Hime made a “nhyu” sound and curled up. She finally turned around and looked at me.

“Mana, do you like that guy?”

“Huh~? You really weren’t listening to me! I said this progress was out of my control, I had no choice[7]!”

“But Mana, you look really happy.”

After being told by Hime, I instinctively touched my face, surprised.

“Th-there’s no such thing—! I think this is really troublesome! I’ll just use him until he breaks and dump him afterwards, dump!”

“So that’s how it is.”

Hime nodded and sipped her tea, taking a breath.

“So, Mana, did you find any outstanding works?”

“Mm, mmm—? That’s right, how about this? ‘My butler seems to become the king during the night’.”

I handed over the manga I was reading to her.

Hime instantly shook her head.

“I don’t recommend ‘MyNight’. The competition from the big names and the long standing circles are too strong, there’s no room to breathe. We should start a new genre.”

“Hmm, I see.”

Even the world of doujinshi have their own hardships.

“The new genre you’re talking about, can you be more specific?”

“You should take a look at this.”

Hime gave me a package of a game.

The setting looked like an aquarium, two men were hugging each other with

a fish tank in the background.

This is ‘My Dolphin and His Whale’, a masterpiece that’s quite obscure. Although it’s still relatively unknown for now, I think it will experience a surge in popularity once it releases the sequel next month. So if we want to do it, we should do it now.”

The gender neutral boy on the packaging attracted me.

For some reason—he looks like Kaoru.

Although that guy’s hair is a bit shorter than the one on the packaging, the shape of the face and the eyes are almost the same.

No, the real one has slightly longer eyelashes……

“Mana, what’s wrong?”

Hime was trying to read my expression, and that pulled me back to reality.

“Do you like the prince that much?”

“Prince?”

“That’s the nickname for the character; you’ll understand once you play it.”

Hime placed the game on my knee.

“How about you try playing? If Mana likes it, we’ll register with this genre as our debut.”

“Mm, okay.”

Since Hime said that, I’ll try it out.

Well, it’s just a game, there’s no way I’ll get addicted.

♦

And so, after school practice time came again.”

“What happened to your face?”

The instant I appeared in the park, Kaoru exclaimed, surprised.

“Those are some bad looking eyebags, and your eyes is really red, did you stay up all night?”

“Um, well, I did stay up for a bit……”

“If you’re not feeling well, how about you go home for now?”

“It’s fine. It’s not like I’m tired.”

Really, I feel like, when I look at Kaoru, I just don’t feel tired anymore.

“His eyelashes are really longer than prince’s……”

“Eh? Who’s this ‘prince’?”

I realized I said it out loud and shook my head.

“Le-let’s not talk about this; help me today too will you!”

“I know.”

I started riding Celine-chan shakily.

If it was a normal day, I would instantly step on the ground out of fear of falling; but there’s no problem today.

Because Kaoru’s here.

“Ah, look out.”

That’s what I mean.

I lost balance after reaching the first tree shakily, and Kaoru stopped my fall properly.

“Your condition is not really good today huh?”

“I said that’s not the case. Let’s move to the next, the next.”

I did the same thing twice, thrice.

The fourth time……this feels good!

Although I started off shakily, I stabilized after I raised my speed.

“Wow, wow, wowow…….”

I can’t help but squeal with happiness.

This, this is what I was looking for! The feeling of splitting the wind apart! This is the feeling I was looking for when I started riding a bike!”

“Very good very good, keep it up!”

Kaoru, who was running by me, also sounded hyped.

When I stepped on the pedal to go faster, the front wheel made a “crunch” sound from an impact.

I stumbled on a small stone.

My hand, which was holding the handle, went numb and I lost balance. My body was thrown off the saddle and leaned forward, and just as I was about to hit the ground—

“Mana!”

When I was inches away from the ground, Kaoru leaped over and caught me.

His slender hands circled around me, rolling across the ground with me.

His face, so close.

“Are you alright!? Did you fall on your head?”

Honestly, this isn’t the time for that.

Kaoru’s long eyelashes were right before me.

I couldn’t move my eyes away from his.

Our chests were pressing tightly against each other.

I wasn’t sure if he could hear my heartbeat; it was unnerving……

“……you look like you’re fine.”

Kaoru’s body moved away from mine.

He stood up and patted the dust off him, with his back turned to me.

“I’m sorry, but I need to go back.”

—eh?

“Wa-wait up, what happened? Hey?”

“I just remembered that I have something important to tend to.”

Kaoru didn’t even turn to look at me and started walking.

I stood up and went after him.

“I’m asking you what happened, hey! I said hey!”

“Mana—what do you think of me?”

Kaoru stopped in his tracks and asked without turning his head.

“Wh-what?”

“Do you think I’m a good person, for helping you learn how to ride a bike?”

“W-well, yeah…..”

No matter how our encounter went, I don’t think he’s a bad person.

“So Mana thinks so too.”

“What do you mean?”

“I—am not the type of person you think I am.”

Kaoru turned to me and said, having a somewhat lonely smile on his face.

“Actually, I’m full of malicious intent, am cunning, and I’m a liar. I’ve always acted like I’m an honest guy. ‘Upright man’, ‘popular guy’ or ‘fantastic guy’, I’m only playing these roles; nobody knows who the real me is, not even the best friend whom I love.”

“So you’re saying that it’s painful?”

So, you don’t want to help me practice anymore? Because you’re tired of it?

“When I’m with Mana, it is really fun. Flipping your skirt, making you fall, I feel like I can just be myself.”

“Th-then, isn’t that fine?”

“……it would be nice if it can continue being that way.”

He made a dark expression that I’ve never seen before.

At this moment, his face overlapped with someone I was very familiar with.

A sad woman who plastered lies over lies, wore masks on top of masks, and ended up losing her real self throughout all of it.

I can’t leave someone who makes this face alone.

“If that’s the case, then let’s do it this way.”

I pledged to Kaoru.

“I’ll learn how to ride a bike alone, and you’ll stop playing one of the ‘roles’ you’re playing. After a month, we’ll meet here and compare our results, how about that?”

Kaoru stared blankly.

“Don’t you feel like the rules are a bit unbalanced?”

“NO[8]. Is continuing to not be able to ride a bike fine? Is continuing putting on a façade fine? In the end, both are about ‘is staying this way fine’. This is a problem related to our pride!”

Kaoru thought about it silently for a while.

Before long, he answered with a weak smile.

“I understand, since Mana said that.”

“Now you’re talking!”

While we were talking, the sun fell in the west, and the area turned dark.

When it struck five, the speakers in the park started playing “The sun sets in the faraway mountains[9]”.

“Then, we’ll meet in a month.”

I walked away with Celine-chan.

The brand new red bike was quite dirty, since I fell quite a few times; I’ll have to wash it when I get back.

“Mana, red colours fits you well!”

Kaoru waved his hand.

“If you ride that red bike with your blonde hair fluttering in the wind, I think it’ll definitely be as beautiful as a drawing.”

“Yes yes, see~you~”

I simply waved and replied, leaving Kaoru.

♦

Even after walking quite a distance, my racing heartbeat did not return to normal.

I touched my face and found it hot to the touch.

His “red colour fits you well.” is still resonating inside my ears.

“Wh-what should I do……”

What should I do what should I do. What should I do.

I’m way too simple!

♦

Ever since that day, I have practiced riding my bike super seriously.

The first two weeks were totally not going my way, but Hime gave me the godly advice of “taking down the pedal is the practice method of the dragoons”, and I improved dramatically. Riding without pedals let me focus on achieving balance, so I improved significantly. As expected of Hime, you’re great Hime, the Hime that only belongs to me!

By the fourth week, I was already fully capable of riding it.

If I’m just going to the convenience store, I ride there myself instead of taking the limousine.

Although the driver-cum-bodyguard Yasuoka complained that “it’s dangerous” and “it’s hard to protect you”, when I answered him with “why don’t you follow me on a bike?” he became obedient. I actually want to see how Yasuoka looks like on a bike.

However, I don’t ride my bike to school.

Not yet.

I decided to meet Kaoru first, and show him that I actually knew how to ride a bike before doing so.

And so, after school on the day we decided on—

I sat on the park bench where I first met him.

A week ago, I went to the bicycle shop and installed a backseat for Celine-chan. I’ll let Kaoru sit behind this time, and I’ll be the one riding.

……is he not here yet?

It’s already past four in the afternoon. Although we didn’t set a time, normally, it wouldn’t be weird for him to be here way earlier than this. Is he

late because he has things to tend to in school or something? How impertinent.

That’s right, I need to ask him the name of his school!

Now, when I think about it, I don’t even know if he’s a middle school or high school student.

Will he be a Hane high student?

If that’s the case, I will make up my mind and attend the same school as Hime.

Hmm—it’s like I’m having naïve thoughts. Dammit, me.

……

……

“He’s la—te!”

What is that guy thinking.

Did he forget about his promise? He’s actually forgetting about his promise with a super beautiful girl? Stop kidding me! Does he know how much effort I made in one month’s time?

It can’t be that he fell sick or injured himself right.

I don’t know how to contact him either, I can’t do anything now can I? I can’t visit him either.

Then, more time passed by.

The speakers were playing “the sun sets in the faraway mountains”.

Although both meetings were at five o’ clock, the area is darker and colder than last time. If I knew it would take this long, I would’ve wore a coat.

“Why is he not coming.”

The words I murmured with my head lowered fell to the grass.

That guy, already, about me……<--Since Japanese and English have different sentence structures, incomplete sentences tend to be a problem since it makes no sense in English. Most translation tend to have a good idea of what the character is trying to say and change it to English form, but I can't tell if Mana is trying to say Kaoru forgot about her or just doesn't care about her or otherwise.-->

Footsteps could be heard.

I instantly raised my head, and saw the silhouette I've been waiting for.

"Idiot!"

I stood up and roared.

"How long did you want me to wait! Y-y-yo-you made me worried!"

"I'm sorry."

Kaoru answered softly.

At that moment, I noticed something weird.

He was wearing a skirt.

Actually, it's more of a uniform.

Although I couldn't remember the name, he was wearing the female uniform of a nearby school.

"What's this, you developed a crossdressing fetish in the short time we have not met each other?"

"It's not like that, Kleinsmith-san."

He was pronouncing the name that he once said was hard to pronounce fluently.

“I’m Kaoru’s younger twin sister, Asoi Kaori.”

Sis,

ter.

“Wh-what are you talking about? Are you serious?”

“That’s true. Although I said that, I have no way of proving it.”

The Kaoru who called himself Kaori remained expressionless.

Is she really someone else?

Such similar looking twins, is it possible?

“My brother won’t come; he couldn’t hold up his side of the promise.”

“Eh……”

This unexpected line made me speechless.

“Th-then ask him to come and explain it himself!”

“That’s impossible.”

“Why!?”

“Because, you……”

Kaori looked like she was trying to find her words for an instant, and then—

“You are starting to fall for Kaoru, aren’t you?”

“_____“

I couldn’t make a sound.

Maybe it was because she got it right, but it isn’t that simple.

Hearing those words from someone else is actually a really sad thing.

It’s like an important treasure that you try to hide from the eyes of others being exposed.

“My brother’s body can’t fall in love.”

Kaori continued coldly.

“If girls fall for him, the only thing he can do is to leave them. That’s the ‘role’ he’s shouldering.”

“Role” again, huh.

Just how important is that thing?

“So, that means he can’t appear in front of me again?”

“Yeah.”

The silence continued on for a while.

I flexed my sweaty fists while trying to calm myself down.

“Then, why did he talk to me; couldn’t he have just ignore a middle school girl who couldn’t ride a bike?”

Kaori took a deep breath and answered.

“That’s because you looked really happy, no?”

“Me?”

“Yeah, you worked hard for that small pride of yours.”

A cold wind swept by, taking away Kaori’s voice.

The leaves on the trees that are also decorating the bicycle route have already started their change in colour..

It shouldn’t be long before they are dyed in a flaming red colour.

“Just like I have heard; this is a really great bicycle.”

Kaori looked at Celine-chan and said that.

“I can ride it properly now; I fulfilled my promise.”

Kaori did not reply to that.

“Then, I shall take my leave.”

“Please hold on for a moment.”

I sat on Celine-chan.

“Sit behind me.”

“But, aren’t two people riding on the same bike not allowed?”

“Enough, just get on!”

Kaori hesitated a little, but she got on in the end.

“You should grab on properly.”

The instant I moved Celine-chan forward, Kaori grabbed my waist.

The feel of her touch sparked my memory.

……so, this girl is really…….

“You really learned how to ride a bike.”

Kaori’s voice from the back sounded a bit hoarse.

“—tell me one thing.”

“Alright.”

“What school does Kaoru attend?”

After a short moment of silence that felt like hesitation—

“Prefectural Hanenoyama high school.”

“Is that so? Thank you.”

I made Celine-chan go faster.

My blonde hair fluttered in the wind.

The scenery I shared with Kaoru flew past me one by one—

♦

It’s decided.

My school of choice will be Hanenoyama High School.

My aim is to make Kaoru fall head over heels for me.

I’ll hold him captive down to his bone marrow and make him forget his “roles” and what not.

And then—I’ll throw him away like broken garbage!

Translator's notes and references

- A system where you rise from kindergarten to university directly without any entrance exams.
- SFX for bike and girl crashing to the ground.
- This line was written in katakana, it’s just Mana’s inability to understand the word.
- A result of a collaboration between Japanese tire making company Bridgestone and French fashion brand Céline, the Bridgestone Celine limited edition bike, extremely rare.
- Mana said this in English.
- Self-published works.
- Both “out of my control” and “I had no choice” are the same phrase originally, しかたなく.
- She said this in English.
- ”Tooki Yama ni Hi wa Ochite”, also known as “Shinsekai” (New World). Music composed by Antonin Dvořák in his “Symphony No. 9”, also known as “New World Symphony”, lyrics written by Horiuchi Keizou.

Afterword

This book was only published a year after the last one, I’m sorry.

It was due to the anime related work[1] and the fifth volume of “Odoru Hoshi Furu Reneshikuru”[2], but I decided to release this book first. I think the release date for the fifth volume of Reneshikuru should be announced soon too.

When I visited Osaka some time ago, I met Misora Riku-san[3], who debuted at the same time I did.

He brought me to a restaurant with delicious whale cooking.

Yuuji: “Al-alright! It’s a rare occasion so I’ll order the full course!”

Misora: “I just ordered the full course not long ago, I’ll get the A course today—”

We talked about our industry while waiting for ten minutes or so.

Yuuji: “Ooh! The whale is here! It’s here!”

Misora: “Ah, so this is the full course—”

In the next moment, something happened that made me doubt my eyes.

Misora slowly extended his chopsticks.

He, ate, my whale meat.

Misora: “Ah—, it’s delicious!”

That didn’t just happen, right? I’m the one who ordered the full course, right? Your order was the A course, right?

Why are you eating it like it’s normallllllll!?

Misora-san’s work “Rakudai Kishi no Calvary” is very interesting and selling well.

You should definitely get your hands on it and take a look.

Well then, this time, the story ends here.

Thank you for accompanying me up till now.

Translator notes and references

- The anime for OreShura was airing when Yuuji Yuuji released volume 6.5.
- 踊る星降るレネシクル, another novel written by Yuuji Yuuji, published by GA Bunko.
- Light novelist, works include “Rakudai Kishi no Eiyuutan”, his first (and only at the moment) to get an anime, and “Ultimate Antihero”.